PASSAGES OF A WORKING LIFE

DURING HALF A CENTURY:

A Prelude of Early Reminiscences.

BY

CHARLES KNIGHT.

> "PAST and FUTURE are the wings
> On whose support, harmoniously combined,
> Moves the great spirit of human knowledge."
>
> WORDSWORTH.

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CHAPTER I.

IN 1824, I am settled as a Publisher in a newly-built house in Pall Mall East, the next house to the College of Physicians. I had occupied for a year a much smaller place of business on the opposite side of the way. This was altogether a new neighbourhood. The "neglected open space, on the north of which stands the King's Mews" (vol. i. p. 117), was still open and still neglected. On the west side of what is now called Trafalgar Square, houses had grown up, which were terminated towards Charing Cross by the Union Club. But there was as yet no Nelson's column; no fountains in the centre, to be ridiculed as dumb-waiters. In the open space, there was an exhibition of the skeleton of a whale. The King's Mews was still there—a building of higher architectural pretensions than the National Gallery; for the architect, Kent, has left his mark upon his age as the professor of an Art with higher capabilities than consist in copying ancient models. The Mews was silent and desolate till a year or two later, when it was occupied, not by the Royal Hawks, as of old, but by Mr. Cross's Menagerie, removed from Exeter Change.

The lions and tigers were not very agreeable neighbours—for they began to roar before day-break, and on Sundays they roared from morning till night, that being their fast-day. The wild beasts went their way to more appropriate quarters, when the Zoological Gardens sprang into existence. Part of the Mews was then given up to the Public Records, which seem to have been always in a state of migration; like the Lord Sandwich, who was compared to a man hung in chains who wanted to be hanged somewhere else. An upper floor of the Mews was next devoted to an exhibition of Manufactures and Machinery—the acorn from which sprang the great tree beneath whose shade all nations were to repose in a commercial millennium. The "neglected open space" has been growing into something like shape during these forty years, after the fashion in which England carries on her improvements, bit by bit, and not a bit that can be deferred to a more convenient season.

During the first years of my residence in Pall Mall East, Saint James's Park was getting rid of its old squalidness. The unenclosed ground about the Canal was railed in and made ornamental. Shrubberies were planted. The road after nightfall had ceased to be a place of danger and licentiousness. "There is gas in the Park." At the time of the Stuarts the Mall had been the lounging place of the highest—the favourite ground of assignation of the Comedies in which Wit and Profligacy long maintained a flourishing co-partnership. Forty years ago the fashionable idlers had given place to happy children and smart nursery-maids. Mechanics out of work, and street vagabonds, always formed a

crowd to see the relief of the Guard. Gapers from the country stood wonderingly upon the Parade, watching the working of the Telegraph at the top of the Admiralty. The old machine, which told its story by the opening and closing of shutters, was superseded by a greater wonder, the Semaphore, which threw out an arm, first on one side and then on another, and at varying heights. Very tedious was the transmission of the message, even by this improved instrument; sometimes impossible from the state of the atmosphere. About 1824 I was summoned as a witness upon a trial in which Mr. Croker was also required to give his testimony. I walked with him for an hour or more up and down Westminster Hall. So full of anecdote was his talk, that I could scarcely agree with him when he said, "The French are right in calling the vestibule to their Palace of Justice *la salle des pas perdus.*" My steps with him were neither lost nor wearisome. At last, looking at his watch, he exclaimed, "Go I must. There is a frigate waiting at Portsmouth for orders to sail, and it will be dark before I can set the Telegraph in motion if I stay longer." The Secretary of the Admiralty writes a few words now, regardless of dark or light, and the faithful wire conveys his orders from port to port, and from sea to sea, far quicker than the flight of Ariel.

The neighbourhood in which I am seated is not as yet a very busy or a very lively one. It is gradually growing into a region dedicated to the Fine Arts. The Society of Painters in Water Colours have fixed their Gallery opposite me. The Society of British Artists have their Exhibition close at hand in Suffolk Street. My next-door neighbour is Mr. Colnaghi,

the printseller. From him, and from his excellent son Dominick, I had some lessons in taste, as they would occasionally show me a few of their choice importations. Their connection was amongst the rich *cognoscenti*, and they cared little for the chance purchasers that are attracted by the furniture prints of later times of diffused art. Messrs. Colnaghi and I then dwelt in a corner. Not many pedestrians passed our doors. But in a few minutes I could be amongst the crowd in the busy world of Charing Cross and the Haymarket. The great thoroughfare where "the Little Theatre" had stood for a century still retained its ancient market for hay, which had been a nuisance in the heart of the town for a much longer period. There I very often found myself staring into a window, if I could possibly get a nook amidst the multitude which daily crowded about the shop of "T. McLean, 26, Haymarket, where Political and other Caricatures are daily publishing." Thus runs the imprint of one who was the chief patron of humourists for the age who were famous before "Punch." A daily Caricature? Yes; and a wilderness of Caricatures, issuing in endless succession out of shops round which crowds gathered from Piccadilly to Cheapside. Let me refresh my recollections of some of these notable productions, by referring to a small collection rescued from heaps of rubbish.

The latter six or seven years of "the first gentleman in Europe" seem to have been the golden age of Caricaturists—some destined to historical fame like George Cruikshank and H. B.;—many, even in their vulgarity, presenting curious traits of manners that might otherwise have had no record. There is, of course, a ludicrous aspect of all human affairs; and

thus Cruikshank's "Mornings at Bow Street" are wondrous exciters of mirth in 1824-5, although the people are still shuddering with horror at the story of Mr. John Thurtell's murder of Mr. William Weare; many, nevertheless, having calmed their spirits by the enjoyment of a dramatic representation of the tragedy of Gill's Hill, with the real horse and gig that drew the victim to his slaughtering-place. But there is higher game to shoot flying than Old Bailey ruffians. Marvellous are the portraits of H. B. What R.A. has so faithfully depicted the Eldon and Lyndhurst and Brougham—the Wellington and Peel and Cumberland—of the later years of George IV. as he has? The picture of Mr. Brougham's *back*, as he moves along the passage of the Common Pleas, is a triumph of art. The highest personage of the realm is left to the mercy of inferior hands. He is, "Mr. George King, the Parish Overseer"—fat and cadaverous, with a padded and tightly-buttoned blue coat and silk stockings; or he is "The slap-up Swell, wat drives when hever he likes;" or he is writhing in an easy-chair, his gouty leg on a cushion, with a bottle and a cheval-glass at his side. As for costume—what can be more trustworthy than these gaudily-coloured extravagancies? The bonnet stretching over the *manches à gigot* like a vast umbrella—the waist compressed into stays that sever the fair one's body into two portions wasp-like—the mountains of ribbon at top, and the acres of flounces below—these were the decorations that made the prettiest Englishwoman as hideous as a Hottentot Venus. The gentleman, on whose arm hangs the expansive lady, is reduced to the smallest possible dimensions by his own stays, over

which the closely-fitting coat is buttoned with the utmost exertion of the valet's strength—nothing loose about him but the enormous shirt frill, which flutters on the breeze, despite the massive brooch. How these creatures move is not easy to comprehend. When the surtout was slowly superseding the swallow-tailed coat, it was equally close-fitting over the compressed ribs; but the exquisite sometimes condescended to veil his beautiful proportions in a vast cloak with a gorgeous fur cape, somewhat out of harmony with his tiny hat, but quite in keeping with his iron-heeled boot which clanked on the pavement like the obsolete patten. These were the days when whiskers came in—timid precursors of the ample beard. Cigar-smoking in the streets was then a novelty; and the caricaturist shows us how the fashion was extending from the made-up dandy to the slovenly dustman.

Amidst these palpable hits at passing follies, we have glimpses of what had begun to be called "The March of Intellect." The "Breakfast and Reading-Room" has on its door-post a list of works within, including "all the Classics;" the bricklayer's labourer sits on his turned-down hod holding a book on which is labelled "St. Giles's Reading Society;" a coach is announced by placard to go from London to York in four hours; and the coming reign of Equality is typified by the sweep carrying a pink umbrella. When the caricaturist exhibited the Duke of Wellington in a stage coachman's garb, as "The Man wot drives the Sovereign," there was a *pendant* to the picture, in a walking monster with the sturdy legs of the conventional John Bull, and the body of a Stanhope printing-press, surmounted with the cap

of Liberty: "This is the Man wot's got the whip hand of 'em all." The shadowy era of Steam is typified by all sorts of chimeras, representing "Walking by Steam, Riding by Steam, and Flying by Steam," with a prophetic warning of some machine blown up, and limbs and trunks of hapless adventurers scattered in the air. Amidst the March of Intellect we have glimpses of the old reign of uncivilisation. "Crowding to the Pit" exhibits "Theatrical Pleasures,"—women trodden under foot; men fighting; and the pickpocket easing the struggling countryman of his watch. At every place where crowds assemble to be amused, ill-humour, incivility, pushing for the best seats, oaths, and fistycuffs, are the rule, in the common want of the social refinement produced by education, and in the absence of all police control. The burglar still prowls about London, and having robbed a jeweller's shop divides his spoil with the watchman. The interior of the parish watch-house still shows the constable of the night dozing over his pipe and his pot of porter. There are still street sights, such as were somewhat more numerous in the earlier part of the century, but which are far from obsolete, even though cocked hats and wigs are exploded. The ragged jade is crying "the last dying speech and confession of six unfortunate malefactors executed this morning," while the London-bred urchin is picking the fat citizen's ample pocket. I hope we have no longer to doubt which is the better teacher, the schoolmaster or the hangman.

It is forty years ago since the Londoners began seriously to think that their traffic was becoming too large for their streets. And yet, what had they to endure in 1824 compared with the obstructions of

1864? The ponderous brewer's dray often blocked up the Strand; but there were no mighty vans, threatening destruction to all the smaller craft that impeded their swift sailing. The broad-wheeled waggon generally crept in and out at nightfall, as it had crept since the days of Fielding and Hogarth. The hackney-coach, never in a hurry, went on "melancholy, slow," patient under every stoppage. No meddling policeman yet presumed to regulate the movements of the driver with a dozen capes, who pulled up when he pleased, unheeding his silk-stockinged fare who was too late for dinner, and sat in the damp straw, shouting and cursing. The omnibus appeared not in our streets till 1831, and when it came, the genteel remained faithful to the foul and stinking hackney-coach, mounting its exclusive iron steps with the true English satisfaction at not being in mixed company. Altogether, the streets were passable, except when the pavement was up for the repair of gas and water pipes—which it was at all seasons. There were schemes of sub-ways, but they met no encouragement. Colonel Trench obtained an audience at the Mansion House, to listen to his proposal of a terrace, eighty feet wide, from London Bridge to Westminster Bridge. Some thought the scheme a good one, but far too grand. Most sneered at such projects of Laputa. The sneerers and doubters kept their ground through a generation; and now we are thinking in reality about such an obvious improvement.

In the semi-thoroughfare of Pall Mall East we had few passing sights. But on the 12th of July, 1824, I stand with my family on our balcony, looking out for a grand funeral procession that is to come from

Great George Street, Westminster, and to pass from Charing Cross up the Haymarket. On the 19th of April Lord Byron had died at Missolonghi. The hearse which was moving up the Haymarket, to end its journey at Newstead Abbey, was followed by a few who loved him, and by many who reverenced his genius. Poets were there—Moore, Campbell, Rogers; statesmen—Grey, Lansdowne, Holland; Greek Deputies, who thought he was to have been the saviour of their country; and English guardians of his fair fame, who had honoured his memory by burning his autobiography. His sudden death—in the land where he was attempting to express by heroic deeds that sympathy with the "Cause of the Greeks" which other eminent men were content to associate with their speeches and their writings—had moved all (excepting a few who refused his body sepulture in our temple of the illustrious dead) to forget how he had latterly abused his great powers, and to remember only how ineffaceably he had inscribed his name amongst the immortals of literature. The pageant is over. Forty years have passed away, and Byron is now judged with the impartiality of posterity. He is not held to be the greatest poet that modern England has produced; he is not execrated as amongst the most immoral. There was much to pity and forgive in his frailties. The mellowing influence of a few more years might have lifted his words and his deeds out of the slough in which he sometimes seemed unwilling to strive for a firmer footing.

At the time of Lord Byron's funeral I was involved in a matter of public interest connected with the career of the deceased poet. I was enduring a disappointment, such as I had scarcely contemplated as

a possible incident of my publishing career. I will relate, as briefly as I can, the story of a Chancery Injunction to restrain me from publishing certain Letters of Lord Byron, which was served upon me five days before the funeral procession which I witnessed on the 12th of July.

Robert Charles Dallas was connected by marriage with the family of the poet. Captain George Anson Byron, the uncle of Lord Byron, married the sister of Mr. Dallas. In 1824, through the intervention of my kind friend, the Rev. Charles Richard Sumner, then residing at Windsor as Domestic Chaplain to George IV., I was offered the publication of a book to be entitled "Correspondence of Lord Byron." Upon receiving intelligence of the death at Missolonghi of the eminent man of whom he had some interesting memorials, Mr. Dallas came from Paris to England to arrange for the publication of some work in which should be exhibited his "Recollections of the Life of Lord Byron from 1808 to the end of 1814." I saw him at the house of his son Alexander, who, having been formerly in the army, had taken orders, and was in 1824 in the ministerial charge of the village of Wooburn, near Beaconsfield. The elder Dallas was then in his seventieth year—a handsome old man, of refined manners, of varied and extensive information; manifesting an affectionate attachment to the memory of the poet, but with a strong religious feeling as to his moral aberrations since the period of their intimate acquaintance, which in some respects might have been called friendship. That intimacy ceased after 1814. Mr. Dallas had many times heard Lord Byron read portions of a book in which he inserted his opinion of the persons with whom he mixed,

which book, he said, he intended for publication after his death. This, I conceive, was the Memoir upon which Mr. Murray advanced two thousand guineas to Thomas Moore; and which was torn and burned, under advice, in the presence of Moore, the advance being repaid to Mr. Murray. Such is Mr. Moore's account of this mysterious transaction.* From hearing some of Lord Byron's opinions of his contemporaries, Mr. Dallas took the hint of writing a volume to be published after his own death and that of Lord Byron, which should present a faithful delineation of the poet's character as he had known him. The judicious advice of the elder author—for Dallas had been a not unsuccessful historian and novelist—was useful to Byron in his tentative walk to fame; and the obligation was amply repaid by the present of the copyright of the first two cantos of "Childe Harold," which, strange to say, Byron was unwilling to publish till encouraged by the judgment of his experienced friend. Byron died at the age of thirty-seven; Dallas could have scarcely contemplated to have been his survivor. The world was eager to learn all it could about the man who had filled so large a space in its thoughts for fourteen years; and Mr. Dallas, not from mere sordid motives, remodelled his Memoir into "Correspondence of Lord Byron." I purchased the manuscript for a large sum; and in June it was advertised for publication. On the 30th of that month Mr. Hobhouse called on me with a friend who, as it subsequently appeared, was to be a witness to our conversation. I was not aware of the disadvantage under which the presence of a witness

* See his letter, dated May 26, in "Annual Register" for 1824.

was intended to place me, but immediately after the interview I made a full note of what took place. Mr. Hobhouse came to protest, as one of the executors of Lord Byron, against the publication of this correspondence. I stated that I had read the manuscript carefully, and that the family and the executors need feel no apprehension as to its tendency, as the work was intended to elevate Lord Byron's moral and intellectual character. Mr. Hobhouse observed, that if individuals were not spoken of with bitterness, and if opinions were not very freely expressed in these letters, they were not like Lord Byron's letters in general. The result was, that the Vice-Chancellor granted an injunction upon the affidavits of Mr. Hobhouse and Mr. Hanson, co-executors, that such contemplated publication was "a breach of private confidence, and a violation of the rights of property." There was an appeal. Our counter-affidavits affirmed that the letters were not of a confidential character. After two months of anxiety, Lord Eldon, the Chancellor, decided "that if A. writes a letter to B., B. has the property in that letter for the purpose of reading and keeping it, but no property in it to publish it." The unfortunate quarto volume, as printed to p. 168, is before me. In a few years, Mr. Moore, in his "Life of Byron," gave his testimony to the value of "a sort of Memoir of the noble Poet, published soon after his death, which, from being founded chiefly on original correspondence, is the most authentic and trustworthy of any that have yet appeared." That Memoir was published by me at the end of 1824, after the death of Mr. Dallas on the 21st of October. It was edited by his son, the Reverend Alexander Dallas, who,

throughout the whole of this affair, acted in the most honourable and conscientious spirit. In the omission of passages of the original manuscript, he evinced a truly Christian temper of moderation towards those who had endeavoured to damage his father's character, by the imputation of unworthy motives in seeking to publish this Correspondence. I was never brought so near to Lord Eldon as during the hours when this case was argued in his private room. I observed with admiration the patient spirit of inquiry; the desire to uphold the authority of previous cases; but with a strong inclination not to decide against the right of publication, when no satisfactory reason could be shown but that of individual caprice or self-interest for suppressing the work. Mr. Kindersley, now a Vice-Chancellor, was our Counsel, and most ably did he perform his duty. At times I thought that the "I doubt" of the great Chancellor would have terminated in our favour. He seemed, even in pronouncing judgment, to have some hesitation about affirming the principle upon which he ultimately decided as to the property in letters, as settled by the law. "Whether that was a decision that could very well have stood *at first* or not I will not undertake to say." But for most purposes of public utility his judgment was valuable. "It is a very different thing, as it appears to me, publishing as information what these letters contain, and publishing the letters themselves." Upon this principle we acted, in regard to the volume which was published at the end of 1824, as "Recollections of Lord Byron." Mr. Moore reaped the full advantage of the suppressed Correspondence, by filling many pages, in 1829, with the letters of Dallas and

Byron that the executors had thought fit to suppress in 1824.

In the midst of these Chancery proceedings a Captain Parry was announced. "A fine rough subject"—as Byron designated this "fire-master who was to burn a whole fleet,"—came into my private room, with a leathern bag slung over his shoulder. He threw it on the table, exclaiming, "There you have the best book that any one can write about the Right Honourable George Gordon, Lord Byron." He opened the wallet; handed me some of the illiterate scrawl; vaunted again and again his friendship with the Right Honourable George Gordon, Lord Byron—always naming him by his titles at full length; and was very much astonished when I declined having anything to say to the affair. Captain Parry found some person to prepare his MS. for the press. An action of some sort arose out of the publication; and I was called as a witness to prove the nature of the contents of that leathern bag, Parry having maintained that he was the sole author of the book. The most remarkable part of this piece of literary manufacture was a ribald description of Jeremy Bentham, running up Fleet Street pursued by a notorious woman called "The City Barge." Parry had indoctrinated his scribe with his own hatred of the Utilitarians of the Greek Committee in London, who sent out printing-presses and pedagogues in more plentiful supply than Congreve-rockets. Byron writes on the 8th February, "Parry says B . . . . . . [? Bentham] is a humbug, to which I say nothing. He sorely laments the printing and civilizing expenses, and wishes that there was not a Sunday school in the world."

The business-house of a young publisher had, at the time of which I am writing, the sort of attraction for flights of authors as a *saltcat* has for pigeons. The whole commerce of Literature is, happily, so changed; the buyers of books and the vendors of books have become so numerous; the competition for the power of securing literary merit, when it first imps its wing, has so enlarged,—that the publishers have now to seek the authors—if they be worth seeking. I am not sure, even, that mediocrity is now the thing abhorred by gods, men, and booksellers. However this may be, I had, in 1824, heaps of unpublished manuscripts to look over; and, what was more troublesome, a good many indignant writers to bow out. There were strange small fishes trying to swim in the wake of the Leviathans in that "yeasty main." Some brought their wares in bulk, and some offered their samples. I honestly think that I tried to be conscientious in my refusals to deal, for I had experienced myself a little of the unknown author's difficulty of obtaining a publisher. Yet it was hard work. I had not learnt the art of refusing in terms that should be meaningless and yet effective. One eminent publisher was the most skilful practitioner of that art with whom I was acquainted. I have heard some such dialogue as this: A. "I presume, Sir, you have at length been able to peruse my novel?"—C. "H'm! chair . . . my reader . . . clever . . . . not quite adapted to public taste . . . . glut . . . . trade very dull . . . perhaps next season."—A. "Would a volume of poems?"—C. "Poems? . . . . oh! . . . . drug . . . ."—A. "But so many come out!"—C. "Yes . . . . on commission . . . . Messrs. —— will publish for you . . . . print on your own account . . . . sell five-

and-twenty . . . . not our line . . . . excuse . . . . gentleman waiting." I began at last to think that for a fashionable publisher there was a grand subject for imitation in Lord Burleigh's shake of the head. Sometimes a book would be offered me that appeared really worth a venture. A huge ungainly Scot walks in, dressed in a semi-military fashion,—a braided surtout and a huge fur cape to his cloak; spluttering forth his unalloyed dialect, and somewhat redolent of the whiskey that he could find south of the Tweed. He at length interested me. He had come to London a literary adventurer. He had been his own educator, for he was once a working weaver. Many were the schemes of books that he was ready to write—schemes that had been in the hands of most publishers, famous or obscure. He was known, I found, to one of the ablest of the staff of the "Times," —a gentleman to whom was committed the charge of the Foreign department of that Journal, which, even forty years ago, founded its success upon the marked talent and reliable knowledge of its writers. Out of the budget of Robert Mudie I selected a plan for a book on London—something in the manner of one which he had published, "The Modern Athens." It was to be called "Babylon the Great." The work was a success. I was acquainted with this singular man for some years. He would occasionally use his powers to good purpose; but his writings were too often inaccurate. He approached nearer to the idea of a hack author of the old times than any man I ever saw. He would undertake any work, however unsuited to his acquirements or his taste. Late in his career, he produced a book—forgotten now perhaps, and too much overlooked by scientific naturalists

in his own day—which exhibits remarkable powers of observation and description. Before he had been condemned to a life of incessant literary toil in London—only made more heavy by sottish indulgence—he was a genuine naturalist, who had looked upon the plants, the insects, the birds, and other animal life of his own moors and mountains, with a rare perception of the curious and beautiful. "The Feathered Tribes of the British Islands" is not an every-day work of science without imagination.

I used sometimes to avail myself of the privilege of propinquity to have a gossip with the worthy old gentleman who first made the name of Colnaghi famous amongst collectors. He once gave me a piece of advice, which to some extent made me shy of pursuing an interesting study of human character. He had seen William Henry Ireland entering my door, and sometimes making a long visit. I delighted to talk with the author of the Shakspere forgeries, having no very harsh opinion of the man who, when a lad of eighteen, had hoaxed the big-wigs of his day, and had laughed in his sleeve when Dr. Parr reverently knelt and rendered thanks that he had lived to read a prayer by the divine poet, finer than anything in the Liturgy. How joyously would he now look back upon his imposture of 1795, preserved by his inordinate vanity from any compunctious visitings that might lead him to think that a fraud was not altogether to be justified by its cleverness! He was now nearly fifty years of age; doing hard work of authorship wherever he could find employment; wretchedly poor, and perhaps not altogether trustworthy. "Take you care of that Mr. Ireland," says my kind neighbour the printseller. "He used to be

very fond of looking over my Rembrandt etchings and other portable rarities. But— I will say no more." I was not taken with any of poor Ireland's schemes. He had outlived his very questionable fame as the author of Shakspere's "Vortigern and Rowena." Thirty years had passed since he made his "Confessions." Unhappily I had at this time transactions with a forger of a very different class.

At the period when I settled as a publisher in London, translations from the French were in far greater demand than at present, when an acquaintance with modern languages is much more general. I had published two very interesting versions of memoirs connected with the war in La Vendée, which were profitable; and I was desirous thus to extend my business operations in a way which involved less risk than the purchase of original works. I procured two quarto volumes by M. Charles Dupin, who had collected his materials in this country with considerable industry, and had used them with rare impartiality. I quickly brought out "The Commercial Power of Great Britain," by the employment of "several hands," as old title-pages express such a division of intellectual labour, without attaching to the term "hands" the offensive signification it is now thought to imply when used with regard to factory workers. Amongst the "hands" that I called in was a well-known writer, described as "a very clever, accomplished, and gentlemanly fellow, who won golden opinions of every body." *
W. G. Graham was the most superlative coxcomb that ever took his daily lounge through Bond Street

* Autobiography of William Jerdan, vol. iii. p. 211.

or the Park—his Hessian boots of the nicest fit—his lavender gloves of the most spotless hue—his tie perfect—his "conduct of a clouded cane" more than "nice." I scarcely dared to talk of common literary drudgery to the exquisite editor of "The Museum," but I was not repulsed with scorn. Yes, he would endeavour to find time to do what I wanted. Very rapidly did he accomplish his task. He got out of a hackney-coach in all imaginable haste, placed a sealed packet in my hands, explained that he was suddenly called from town, and—would I give him a check on account. The bulk of the parcel was an evidence of his industry—of his talent I had no doubt; so he went off with his check, and very quickly cashed it. I am not sure that I ever saw him again. Indeed, I never desired to see him; for when I opened the packet, guarded with seal after seal as a most precious treasure—lo! the half-dozen quires of paper of which it was composed, though seeming to be as honest copy as ever went to the printer, were as false as the coin with which the magician in the "Arabian Nights" deluded the stall-keepers of the oriental bazaars. The outer leaves of each section were the fairest of manuscripts; the inner leaves were blank paper. Months passed away. I had found more trustworthy "hands." One day I received a letter, which is now before me: "If you can give me your check for as much of the enclosed as may not be due to you I should feel greatly obliged." I might have exclaimed "Not so bad as we seem," had I then been familiar with the phrase. The "enclosed" is also before me—a Bill drawn by W. G. Graham on Mr. G. B. Whittaker, at two months for £60, dated September 16th.

1825, duly accepted by the eminent bookseller, and endorsed by the drawer. The "clever, accomplished, and gentlemanly fellow," had from me what he asked for. On the 19th of November the acceptance became due, and when presented had a terrible word written across the face in ominous red ink, "Forgery." That November was a time of dread for commercial men. The panic came in the next fortnight, involving several publishers in its ruin. The wretched man of whom I write had committed other forgeries upon the house of Mr. Whittaker, whose bankers, for their own safety, requiring a list of all his acceptances, were surprised to find some of a speculative character—such as large engagements for hops. His business, though otherwise intrinsically sound, was denied the usual amount of discount, and he was compelled to stop payment. The bold swindler had defrauded many connected with the publishing trade besides myself. One victim was resolved to shew no mercy if Graham could be apprehended. He was saved an ignominious end by escaping to New York, where his career of fraud was quickly closed. He was shot in a duel soon after he landed.

When I was first planted in the West End as a Publisher of Miscellaneous Works, I adopted the honest, but somewhat impolitic, rule of never suffering myself to be denied. The natural consequence was, that half my day was spent in listening to very dull harangues upon neglected merit, from authors who were making the round of hard-hearted and mercenary dealers, who, with the hereditary effrontery of the trade, refused to embark their capital in printing books that they were satisfied would not sell. But there would often come a welcome relief in

clients of a better order. Of such I may mention Captain John Dundas Cochrane, whose "Pedestrian Journey through Russia and Siberian Tartary," I published with great success. Most amusing was the conversation of this eccentric traveller, who did me the honour to introduce me to his wife, brought to England by him from the end of the Kamtchatkan peninsula—a beautiful little flaxen-haired creature, who shrank from my presence and hid behind a table. He did not persuade me to adopt the custom which had been forced upon him in default of other food—that of eating fish raw, which he retained in the heart of civilised life as a luxury far greater than any nice cookery could produce. In a varied intercourse such as that of an aspiring publisher, he must have very dull faculties to allow them to stagnate. Give him a prosperous career and few occupations can be happier, great as may be his risks and responsibilities. Even the loungers who had no objects of business to propound kept up a pleasant excitement. The mere gossipers were not unprofitable visitors. I endured much desultory tattle in the conviction that a successful publisher must make up his mind to give many hours to what, in the crowded marts "where merchants most do congregate," would be deemed utter waste of time. Some of the pleasant friends of those mornings in Pall Mall East now "come like shadows" before me. Let me call up the memory of one to whom the words of Junius might be applied, "he is a *genus*—let him stand alone." Thomas Gent sits rollicking on the largest chair that he can find—as fat, not quite as witty, but with as sufficient an amount of "impudent sauciness," as Falstaff. I have witnessed the irresistible

joke come slowly and demurely off the tongue of Hood, he perfectly grave and silent after the effusion, whilst his hearers are bursting again and again into peals of laughter. I have seen the retort, quick and blinding as lightning, flash from the lips of Jerrold, whilst he himself led the chorus of mirth at his own success, and the victim would laugh the longest and the loudest. But never saw I such effects of mere drollery, resting upon the slightest sub-soil of intellect, as my corpulent friend produced, whether he encountered an acquaintance as he slowly paced the Strand "larding the lean earth;" or gathered a crowd round him in the box-lobby to grin as they had just grinned at Liston; or, falling asleep the instant he had dined, suddenly woke up and set the table in a roar, again closing his eyes and again waking up to the same success. And yet I can recollect none of this humourist's jests or his anecdotes. Yes—one. He was a Yarmouth man, and there also was sojourning his reverend friend, Mr. Croly, and their genial associate, J. P. Davis. A hospitable alderman of that flourishing port had invited them to dinner; the three were the earliest of the guests. As usual Gent fired off some absurdity which put an end to all conventional gravity, even in the stark clergyman, and the trio began "to giggle and make giggle." The solemn host, unused to such explosions, exclaimed in an agony, "Gentlemen, gentlemen—pray be quiet—the company arn't come." Croly drew himself up to his full height, and addressing the unfortunate man with that withering haughtiness which was sometimes a mask for his good nature, said, "What, sir! are we hired?—are we hired?" I must not linger amongst the loungers of my back

room, yet I cannot forget one of the pleasantest and most improving, Dr. Maginn. To him the gossip of the modern world was as familiar as the learning of the ancient. From some organic defect of utterance his speech was occasionally hesitating; yet when his words came forth they were full of meaning—always pleasant, often wise. It cannot, however, be denied he was best of a morning,—the double excitement of the table and the talk was sometimes too much for him.

At the end of 1824 I was busy, as all publishers were when the Courts of Law had opened, and fashionable people were returning to London. That Christmas was the first that I had passed away from Windsor. It was a quiet season for my family, not unaccompanied with sad remembrances. My recent loss prevented me entering into the London round of amusements. I took not my children to Covent Garden to marvel at the transformations of the pantomime—to laugh with them at the clown, perhaps with as exuberant a mirth as that of younger days at the wondrous face-power of Grimaldi. But the out-door aspects of London enjoyment at Christmas were not unobserved by me. Honestly to speak, it was a dismal spectacle. In every broad thoroughfare, and in every close alley, there was drunkenness abroad; not shamefaced drunkenness, creeping in maudlin helplessness to its home by the side of the scolding wife, but rampant, insolent, outrageous drunkenness. No decent woman, even in broad daylight, could at the holiday seasons dare to walk alone in the Strand or Pall Mall, much less in the regions into which flowed all the filth of the adjacent Seven Dials. More pitiable than the blackguardism

that swarmed in the streets was the listless idleness that loitered before shop-windows, or crowded round the barrel-organ and the monkey, or rendered the *cul-de-sac* impervious to its occupiers, for there the acrobat had spread his carpet. Throngs of mechanics who had risen on "boxing-day" dedicating themselves to unlimited pleasure, were weary of the sweet do-nothing before the dinner hour, and the weariness had its natural termination in the tap-room. No blithe-looking father in his Sunday coat, and happy mother in her smartest bonnet, each with a child asking eager questions amidst unwonted sights, could then be observed entering the old-fashioned gateway of the British Museum,—the sturdy Briton proudly feeling that the place was his own, and that he had a right of entrance. During the holiday weeks of Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide, the doors of the British Museum were rigidly closed against the intrusive public. There was then no National Gallery, no Museum at South Kensington; and if there had been, no admission would have been found, at the time before legislators dreamed that some few of the working population might, perchance, be tempted from low gratifications into the higher enjoyments of taste, for which, as we have now learnt, the English are not by nature disqualified. For those who would not have begrudged a few shillings for some public amusement of a rational nature, there were no Zoological Gardens. It is true that Exeter Change still exhibited its great elephant, and that the lions in the Tower might be seen for a shilling. So might other wonders in the Tower,—but always a shilling for every department of wonders. The doors of St. Paul's and of Westminster

Abbey were never open without a fee, except during the hours of divine service. A working man with his wife and boy could have kept his household for a week, at the cost of experimenting in the Whispering Gallery, and ascending the dark stairs of the dome; or gazing upon the Coronation chair, and the waxen effigy of Queen Elizabeth's maid of honour who died from pricking her finger. There were no cheap trains to Kew Gardens or Hampton Court, which places were comparatively unknown to the bulk of the population; in a word, there was nothing whatever of public enjoyment of an improving nature to be found in our hard-working hive, when the workers had their rare holiday. So, almost as a matter of necessity, boxing-day could be scarcely got through without the gin-shop in its primitive dirt, for the gin-palace was not as yet. When night came, the pit and gallery of the few theatres were crowded, after such a fight at their entrances as the caricaturist depicted. Musical performances for the multitude there were none; for the popular taste for any higher music than a jig had not yet been developed, and there was no Exeter Hall. The choruses in the streets of jolly good fellows made night hideous; and when the din was overpast, the waits, horribly out of harmony, were almost as bitter enemies to sleep as the rattle of the watchman and the screech of the virago that he was dragging to durance vile. Such was the London Christmas forty years ago.

CHAPTER II.

WE have no sufficiently clear record of the commerce of books in the days of Pope and Addison, to be enabled to say that there was a marked Publishing Season. The fact that there was a Long Vacation may lead us to conclude that when "Chambers in the King's Bench Walk" were deserted, Mr. Tonson was entertaining the Kit-Cat Club in his Thames-side Villa, and that Mr. Lintot had left the custody of his "rubric posts" to his shop boys. Whatever may have been the custom in the reign of the first George, undoubtedly the publisher of any note asserted his right to a Season in the reign of George IV. For the three months of autumn, the Circulating Libraries were indifferently supplied with Travel and Romance; but great were the preparations for the coming campaign. Manuscripts were in critical hands, proofs were circulating by post, negotiations were on foot, advertisements were being prepared, mysterious hints about "the Journal of a noble lady, that had been read to a select circle of fashionables," appeared in the papers. Like the mighty ones of my craft, I was glad that the Season had come to an end, in the July of 1825. With me it was closed by the publication of a work of unusual importance. Milton's Latin Treatise on Christian Doctrine, having been discovered in the State Paper Office, was placed

in the hands of the Librarian and Historiographer to George IV., for the laudable purpose of giving to the world an unpublished work of one of the greatest of English poets. That office was held in 1824 by the Rev. Charles Richard Sumner. The original, and a translation, were printed at the Cambridge University Press, and I was selected as their Publisher.* At the time of its publication the editor and translator was D.D., and a prebendary of Canterbury. In 1827 he succeeded Dr. Tomline, as bishop of Winchester. I cannot advert to the confidence which Dr. Sumner placed in me, and bear in mind the whole nature of my intercourse with him, without a feeling of affectionate gratitude to a most zealous and constant friend, whose kindness was never alloyed by any of the condescension of patronage—who, when he had arrived at almost the highest ecclesiastical dignity, preserved the same frank and amiable demeanour that he had exhibited when I first knew him at Windsor—who, a year or two later, won my heart by his public spirit, as well as by his personal kindness,—for it was he, in his diocese of Llandaff, who, in a letter of interrogatories sent round to his Clergy, asked a question which became famous—"Are there infant schools in your parish—and, if not, why not?" It is in me an act of simple justice here to record a circumstance which has been misunderstood in connection with the translation of Milton's posthumous work.

In 1824 I went with Mr. Sumner to Cambridge, to arrange for the printing of the original Latin MS. at the University Press. Marvellous to relate, there

* A reprint of the translation has been published by Mr. Bohn.

was no functionary of that printing office who was competent to see that the corrections upon the proofs as they passed out of the hands of the editor were properly attended to. I had the pleasure of introducing Mr. Sidney Walker to Mr. Sumner, and it was agreed that he should undertake this duty. The printing of the Latin edition, and of the English translation, was completed in the course of a twelvemonth. The Preface by the translator contains the following paragraph: "He cannot conclude these preliminary remarks without acknowledging his obligations to W. S. Walker, Esq., Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, who has not only discharged the greater part of the laborious office of correcting the press, but whose valuable suggestions during the progress of the work have contributed to remove some of its imperfections." The Rev. J. Moultrie, in his Memoir of Mr. Walker, prefixed to his "Poetical Remains," says of this incident in his friend's literary career, "The work being printed at the University Press, Walker was selected as resident on the spot, and eminently qualified for the office, to revise and correct the proof sheets. In the performance of this task he considerably overstepped the limits of his commission, reviewing not only the printer's but the translator's labour, and leaving upon the work the indelible impress of his own masterly scholarship and profound appreciation of the author's genius." Compared with this statement the acknowledgment by Dr. Sumner of his obligations to Mr. Walker may appear not only cold, but insufficient. It is my duty to state that not only had the accomplished Fellow of Trinity "considerably overstepped the limits of his commission," but

had concealed the fact of having done so till the printing of the work was completed. He was fastidious to excess in his critical scholarship. His clandestine mode of proceeding was to be attributed to his utter want of decision of character. To me he at length made the tardy communication of his error. "I ought properly to address Mr. Sumner, but I cannot muster confidence to make the communication to him. The truth is, that I have been guilty of great and unwarrantable liberties with regard to the translation of Milton. I understood it to be his wish that I should make no alterations, except such as were approved of by him; and with this wish I conformed for a short time, except some minute encroachments *after the sheet was returned from Windsor;* but as I went on, so many instances occurred to me in which, so I thought, the translation might be bettered, that at last I dropped all remorse and altered without compunction. The truth was, that although the translation would in any case have been quite as good as is generally thought proper to bestow on modern works, written in foreign languages—so that the public would not have complained,—I could not be satisfied, unless it were something better." Many, he says, may think he had too rigid ideas of the duties of a translator. His justification was to be found, he maintains, in the desire he felt "that the work might be, not good in a certain stated degree, but as good as it could be made."

The days before "Murray"—the days when the tourist went groping his way through foreign towns without the friendly aid of the famous "Hand Books for Travellers"—seem to belong to an era when the majority of Britons were, in some sense, "almost

separated from the whole world." Yet, in 1825, these excellent books would have been before their time. Travelling had not then become a fashion. The modes of conveyance were tedious, uncertain, and expensive. An opportunity was presented to me in the August of that year of seeing Paris under agreeable circumstances; and I persuaded myself that through a personal intercourse with French publishers I could unite business with pleasure. I joined a family, of which the mother had been the friend of my childhood—whose elder daughter was growing into the elegant and accomplished woman—whose two sons were Etonians, full of spirit and curiosity. We travelled through Picardy with a calèche and pair of horses that we had hired at Calais; accomplishing about forty miles each day, with ample opportunities of seeing the country and observing the manners of the people. The Diligence often passed us or met us. We could never want a hearty laugh whilst the postilion diverted us with his jack-boots and his pigtail. We drew up beneath the hedge-row apple-trees as he cracked his leathern whip with the noise of a little blunderbuss. We rather pitied the poor creatures, who, in the hottest of weather, were shut up in the interior of that machine. We did not even envy the uninterrupted prospect of the few who sat aloft with the conducteur in the cabriolet. So we leisurely journeyed, pleased with all we saw; enjoying the quails and partridges, which we often found at dinner or supper, although the glory of bread-sauce was reserved for our own country, according to the belief of Lord Devon; mightily relishing the wine which we always thought surprisingly cheap; and well inclined to believe that

there were no bad inns upon the road which the English were wont to use in the days of leisurely travelling. They are gone,—for the tourist from Boulogne to Paris of 1864—the Diligence, the Malle poste, the colossal boots, and the queues. He cannot enjoy, as we enjoyed, the quiet dinner at Montreuil; the nice supper at Abbeville; the market day at Beauvais, amidst smiling vendors of eggs and poultry in their wondrous caps and sabots, who did not seem as if they ever toiled in the harvest time as we had seen some of their hard-worked country-women. We now rush from London to Paris in twelve hours, and fancy we have seen France.

The Paris of Charles X. was as suggestive of political and social contrasts to the Paris of the first Napoleon, as its physical aspects gave no promise of the wonders that might be effected under a sagacious despotism during the lapse of another generation. There was a constitutional Government; a vigorous opposition; an unlicensed Press. There were earnest speakers in the Chamber of Deputies; bitter satirists in prose and verse; Beranger was on all lips, and Courier might be read in castrated editions; the officers of the Crown instituted proceedings against journalists, but the tribunals refused to condemn them. There was then an open struggle between the narrowest bigotry and the broadest licence in matters of religion. The priestly and ultra-royalist parties, with the Court at their head, were despised. They were "*les infiniment petits*," whose fall would be a Revolution. I saw the King and the Royal family walk from the Tuileries in procession to Notre Dame, on the Feast of the Ascension of the Virgin, amidst a population intent upon a holiday

and in tolerable good humour. But there was no enthusiasm, and there were significant shrugs of the shoulders. While the King was marching through the streets at the head of an army of priests, the people were discussing the atrocity of the law of sacrilege which was being debated in the Chamber of Deputies, under which law the profanation of the sacred utensils was to be punished with death. Nevertheless, all was gaiety in this beauteous summer time. There were then noble trees on the Boulevards, beneath whose shade we sipped our ices, or lingered till the deep blue sky was gemmed with stars. The gardens of the Tuileries and the Champs Elysées were filled with crowds of idlers. Versailles, with its *Grandes Eaux*, was to us a place of wonder and delight. The Palace of the Grand Monarque, before Louis Philippe had dedicated its saloons to the glories of the Consulate and the Empire, presented historical memorials more interesting than picture after picture of battle fields, most of them bad and all wearisome. The streets of Paris were fertile in remembrances of a past generation of comparative uncivilisation. The stinking gutter stagnated in the middle of the causeway, which had no *trottoirs*. The rope stretched from side to side, with the lamp in the centre, made us understand the meaning of *à la lanterne*. I was awakened every morning at five o'clock by the cleaving of wood in the Rue Richelieu, for the winter supply of the Hôtel des Princes, in which I had the misfortune to be lodged in a front bed-room. In spite of some discomforts—even in a first-rate hotel—which have now vanished, we were well pleased with our fortnight of sight-seeing; were not discomposed by assisting at the representation of

three farces at the Théâtre des Variétés, in which the chief humour was a burlesque of English manners. At the Theâtre Français I saw Talma in Sylla, and lost my belief that French dramatic poetry was essentially a conventional and tame affair. The great tragedian united, as I then felt, the majestic impressiveness of Kemble with the passionate energy of Kean. I am afraid that I was too much pleased and excited in Paris to attend very profitably to business. I found the publishers with whom I had negotiations very obliging and unpretentious; living plainly in their houses of business; and not affecting to be anything grander than dealers in books, who had a shrewd eye to a bargain. We travelled homeward through Normandy, where the green fields and the pretty churches reminded us of English scenes. We rested for a night at Neufchâtel, where we tasted the delicious little cheeses fresh in the place of their production—a luxury made just then somewhat famous by the mistake of a worthy alderman of London, who, having first seen the delicacy at a great man's table, said he would order a hundred of his correspondent, and was astonished by the delivery at his door of a ton or two of the hard cheeses of Switzerland, almost as big as a cart wheel. May I dare to say that some of the leisure of the ladies of our party was employed in sewing sundry yards of French silk within the lining of my cloak. Smuggling was then deemed a venial offence. Huskisson's great measure removing the prohibition upon the importation of foreign silks was not to take effect till 1826.

When I returned in September, my family were at Windsor. I had the opportunity, in company

with Dr. Sumner, of seeing the progress of the great improvements of the Castle, and of listening to the clear explanations of his plans, which Mr. Wyatville gave with the straightforward simplicity characteristic of his practical genius. In the previous summer, soon after the commencement of the works, I had gone into the old building with Mr. Britton. We had found the architect sitting alone surrounded with demolished walls at the north-east angle of the Terrace front, deeply engaged in the study of a ground plan. His idea of the beautiful octagon tower, called Brunswick, was then shaping itself into that harmonious combination of somewhat incongruous parts which he so happily effected in many portions of the fortress-palace of Edward III., by the careful preservation of old features and the happy adaptation of new. I could not long linger at Windsor in the enjoyment of a beautiful autumn, but had to be much in London, as the publishing season was approaching. Every day was then giving birth to some new project for the employment of capital, although during the Session of Parliament, which closed on the 6th of July, two hundred and eighty-six private bills had been passed for schemes of local improvement, chiefly to be effected by the agency of Joint Stock Companies. You could scarcely meet a man in the city who had not something to say about the rise or the fall in shares—shares in Canals, in Rail-roads, in Packets, in Gas-works, in Mines, in Banks, in Insurance Offices, in Fisheries, in Sugar and Indigo cultivation, in Irish Manufactures, in Newspapers. At the beginning of the Session the King had "the happiness of congratulating" his Parliament on "general and in-

creasing prosperity;" at the end of the Session the same prosperity "continues to pervade every part of the kingdom." These sanguine views gained for the Chancellor of the Exchequer the title of "Prosperity Robinson." Turning aside from thoughts of French translations and other productions of ephemeral Literature, I had devised a large and comprehensive scheme of a "National Library"—a cheap series of books which should condense the information contained in voluminous and expensive works. I prepared a Prospectus, in which I truly said, "It is to be remarked that, with some few striking exceptions, the general Literature of our country is either addressed to men of leisure and research, and is, therefore, bulky and diffuse; or it is frittered down into meagre and spiritless outlines, adapted only for juvenile capacities." I settled the subjects of about a hundred volumes, in History, Science and Art, and Miscellaneous Literature. I submitted this Prospectus to Mr. Colburn, who expressed his desire to join me in the undertaking, in conjunction with some wholesale house. It was settled that Mr. Whittaker should be applied to, and accordingly the general terms of an agreement were soon arranged between us.

During November I applied myself assiduously to the preparation of a complete scheme to go before the public. I obtained the opinion of judicious advisers. I made overtures to writers. I received a letter from my old friend the Rev. J. M. Turner, in which he says, "I hear from Mr. Locker that you are about to undertake an extensive scheme of publication something like that which Constable is advertising so assiduously. I shall be very glad

to enlist as a contributor to your stores. Constable's programme seems very imposing, but like all comprehensive sketches it is both deficient and redundant." My own plan was no doubt open to the same objection. It was more systematic than Constable's, and, therefore, perhaps less attractive. I was in high spirits at the prospect of congenial occupation in the editorship of this series, and in a probable source of profit with a limited responsibility. Mr. Whittaker was as sanguine as myself. We had contracted an intimacy as members of a Club of a peculiar character, of which there was no previous example, and which, as far as I know, has had no imitators. "The Publishers' Club" included under that comprehensive name Authors as well as Publishers *proper*. Mr. Jerdan, in his "Autobiography," describes this Club as "The Literary Club," but I never knew it under any other name than "The Publishers'." Our monthly dinner was at the Albion, in Aldersgate Street. It was an exceedingly pleasant association, even when the proceedings were not enlivened by invited guests, such as the great comedians Munden and Mathews. I remember an evening of rare enjoyment, when I sat by Munden—a man of the most exquisite humour—a great actor when asked for an exercise of his art, but returning naturally to take an intelligent share in general conversation. On ordinary occasions, Mr. Croly harangued in a style which some deemed eloquence; Mr. Jerdan made puns which some regarded as wit; and Dr. Kitchener pronounced dogmatic opinions upon cookery and wine. Hood, a few years before, had spread his fame far and wide in his "Ode to Dr. Kitchener;" but I was not quite

aware of our Vice-Chairman's greatness in the world of gastronomy till I saw the rich landlord of the Albion address himself to the sage physician, whose maxim to ward off dyspepsia was "masticate, denticate, chump, and chew." As he sat, eagerly looking for the remove, with his pocket-case of sauces by his side, Mr. —— humbly requested that he would deign to taste of a certain dish which the genius of his *chef* had recently produced. The fiat of approval was given. Henceforth the luxury would be classical.

The first meeting of our Club season of 1825 was joyous. The second meeting was dismal. The commercial world was in alarm. How well I remember the anxious face of Mr. James Duncan, one of the most prudent and sagacious of publishers! Even such a man

> "Drew Priam's curtain in the dead of night,
> And would have told him, half his Troy was burnt."

Duncan would have told us, had he dared, that half the Row was shaky. Few of our Club after this meeting were in the humour for a monthly festivity. The Panic had come, passing over all our tribe like the Simoom, bringing with it general feebleness, if not individual death. Scott, in the blind confidence which he felt, even whilst he and Constable were signing "sheafs of bills," writes in his Journal of November 25th, "After all, it is hard that the vagabond stock-jobbing Jews, should, for their own purposes, make such a state of credit as now exists in London." If the "pleasant vices" of speculative men had not found work for the stock-jobbing Jews, there would have been no panic to become one of

the "instruments to scourge us"—the humblest subjects, and the highest potentates, of "the realms of print." The house of Whittaker succumbed very early, and its affairs were righteously administered by Trustees, who in a few years restored it to its old position. Hurst and Robinson fell, never to rise again, and pulled down Constable and Ballantyne with them. Then began the heroic period of Walter Scott's life, when we might almost envy him his misfortunes and mistakes, in the contemplation of the grandeur of his efforts to retrieve them.

On the 6th of December I had been at Windsor. Returning to London by the afternoon coach, I learnt that the banking-house of Williams & Co. had stopped payment. They were the bankers who transacted the business of Messrs. Ramsbottom and Legh, the partners in our sole Windsor bank, and large brewers. I was upon intimate terms with both these gentlemen, and I dreaded the consequence to them of this unexpected calamity. Late at night they both arrived at my house in Pall Mall East. We spent several hours in anxious consultation; but it was at length agreed that Mr. Legh should immediately return to Windsor, to countermand an order that had been given for the closing of their bank on the morning of the 7th. It had seemed impossible upon the first receipt of the disastrous intelligence to prevent a fatal run upon them; for their resources, beyond the regulated supply of specie and banknotes to pay their own well-worn pieces of paper—the ordinary currency of the town and neighbourhood—were now locked up in the unfortunate London house. Mr. Ramsbottom was one of the members for the borough, very

popular, and of unimpeached credit. He and I set out on an excursion, west and east, to seek the assistance of bankers and other capitalists, his friends. In the Albany we found the partners of one firm, that of Messrs. Everett, deliberating by lamp-light. A few words showed how unavailing was the hope of help from them: "We shall ourselves stop at nine o'clock." The dark December morning gradually grew lighter; the gas-lamps died out; but long before it was perfect day we found Lombard Street blocked up by eager crowds, each man struggling to be foremost at the bank where he kept his account if its doors should be opened. We entered several of the banks where the counters were surrounded by the presenters of cheques; and were witnesses to the calm which sustains the honest English trader in the hour of difficulty, even as it has sustained many a naval commander when the ship has struck upon a sunken rock, and his own safety is the last consideration. There was a London office of Messrs. Ramsbottom's brewery; and here we found a considerable sum that, through the prudence of the principal clerk, had not been paid in on the 6th to their banking agents in Birchin Lane. We decided upon a plan of action, the artifice of which was justified by the necessity of the case. I took my seat in a postchaise with my treasure—something less than a thousand pounds—and was whirled to Windsor in a couple of hours by four horses. As I changed horses at Hounslow, or stopped at turnpikes, I proclaimed, "funds for the Windsor Bank." The news spread down the road in that extraordinary way in which news, good or bad, is promulgated. I drove triumphantly into the yard

of the Bank, amidst the hurrahs of a multitude outside, to whom I had proclaimed my mission. There was a meeting at the same time taking place at the Town Hall, at which my townsmen entered into resolutions declaring their opinion of the solvency of the firm, and the necessity of not pressing upon them in the hour of difficulty. The bank was saved. Its failure would have spread general dismay and misery; especially as several of the tradesmen largely employed in the alterations of the Castle depended upon advances for wages upon their credit accounts with Messrs. Ramsbottom. I went the next day to Dr. Sumner, and represented to him that a prompt payment of arrears from the Board of Works would be an immense relief. With a ready kindness he applied to the highest quarter. The King's intervention,—then, perhaps, more potent in overcoming obstacles of routine than in the present day—quickly accomplished this object. Williams & Co. resumed payments in a few weeks.

Lockhart, in his life of Scott, relates that in January, 1826, Constable, awakening from his dream of safety from impending ruin, had come to London with the resolution of applying to the Bank of England, "for a loan of from 100,000*l.* to 200,000*l.* on the security of the copyrights in his possession." Copyrights, in that perilous season, were a most unmarketable commodity; and the Governor and Company of the Bank of England, or indeed any other bankers, would have regarded such securities, and even the most valuable stock of a publisher, as so much waste paper. My own credit was unassailed amidst suspicions on every side. I had no engagements that had arisen out of the system of

accommodation bills,—those treacherous allies who pull down the strongest in the hour of mortal conflict. Such desperate help in tiding over difficulties was fully developed in all its evils by that unsparing Panic. I had trade engagements that would have been duly met, if a paralysis of commerce had not been eventually as dangerous as its apoplexy; chronic decay as fatal as sudden extinction. The publications of 1825 would no longer sell in 1826; the new works projected, written, half printed, advertised, must wait for a more propitious time. The "tender leaves" would not endure that "killing frost." This was the reasoning of most of us—of nearly all, with the exception of Mr. Colburn, who pushed his new works with great vigour, having the market of light literature almost wholly to himself. He was perhaps more right than his fellows, in following a course which the most wonderful Common-sense, lifted into the noblest poetry by the power of Imagination, has prescribed as well for publishers as for statesmen:—

> "To have done, is to hang
> Quite out of fashion, like a rusty mail
> In monumental mockery."
>
> *Troilus and Cressida.*

For myself, I saw and heard so much of commercial misery, of fear that kills, of unmerited suspicion troubling the sleep of the most prudent, that the spring was passing into summer, and I began to look upon 1826 as a lost year of business. I could not resolve to "take the instant way"—to "keep the path." I had achieved something like a position in 1825. I could scarcely hope to regain it by following the usual course of publishing books that might

live their little hour of novelty and then pass to the trunkmakers. Every day made me sick of my occupation. "The Brazen Head," of which I have spoken, dropped upon the town like a leaden lump. Credit was whispered away. Harsh judgments were pronounced upon the unlucky. In this dark season I sometimes heard the raven-croak of a man who peeped into every corner, and was nightly exhibited in his peeping attitude to laughing play-goers. The Paul Pry of Liston was a chubby, rosy-faced, good-natured, but essentially mischievous meddler, known as Tom Hill. He would lay hold of your button in the streets, and detain you by some such talk as this:—"Do you know if W— has given up his hunter? I asked one of his porters, and he wouldn't tell me . . . . . Isn't it suspicious to see —— and Co. sending a waggon load of stock from their warehouse? . . . . Do give a hint to your friend in —— Street, that his servants are very extravagant. I looked down his area and saw them having hot rolls for breakfast." I got away from this moral fog of London as soon as I could. I was shut up, moody and irresolute, at Windsor, in the summer, projectting, planning, re-arranging my "National Library" scheme, which had been stifled by the panic before its birth; adding a book here and there, or curtailing the list, already too long. I was about to return to London with no more preparation for a coming campaign than half a dozen various prospectuses of this work. It had become a fixed idea with me, to the exclusion of all minor purposes of business or literary occupation.

In the autumn of 1826 Mr. Brougham was organizing his "Society for the Diffusion of Useful

Knowledge." The Long Vacation was at an end, and in that November, the prospectus of the new society was privately circulated. It said,—"The object of the Society is strictly limited to what its title imports, namely, the imparting useful information to all classes of the community, particularly to such as are unable to avail themselves of experienced teachers, or may prefer learning by themselves." Here, then, appeared an opening for the nurture of my cherished scheme, of which I ought to avail myself. At Windsor, in November, I received a letter from Mr. M. D. Hill, wishing me to come to town immediately, as he had mentioned my plan of popular books to Mr. Brougham, and to a committee for the encouragement of such a project, and that he thought great things might be done. Of course this communication brought me instantly to London; and I was very quickly introduced by Mr. Hill to Mr. Brougham. That interview is indelibly impressed upon my memory with all its attendant circumstances. I had never come across the renowned orator in private life, or had seen him under an every-day character. There was an image in my mind of the Queen's Attorney-General, as I had often beheld him in the House of Lords, wielding a power in the proceedings on the Bill of Pains and Penalties which no other man seemed to possess—equivocating witnesses crouching beneath his withering scorn; mighty peers shrinking from his bold sarcasm; the whole assembly visibly agitated at times by the splendour of his eloquence. The Henry Brougham I had gazed upon was, in my mind's eye, a man stern and repellent; not to be approached with any attempt at familiarity; whose

opinions must be received with the most respectful deference; whose mental superiority would be somewhat overwhelming. The Henry Brougham into whose chambers in Lincoln's Inn I was ushered on a November night was sitting amidst his briefs, evidently delighted to be interrupted for some thoughts more attractive. After saluting my friend with a joke, and grasping my hand with a cordial welcome, he went at once to the subject upon which I came. The rapid conception of the features of my plan; the few brief questions as to my wishes; the manifestation of a warm interest in my views without the slightest attempt to be patronizing, were most gratifying to me. The image of the great orator of 1820 altogether vanished when I listened to the unpretentious and often playful words of one of the best table-talkers of 1826,—it vanished, even as the full-bottomed wig of that time seemed to have belonged to some other head than the close-cropped one upon which I looked. The foremost advocate of popular education made no harangues about its advantages. He did not indoctrinate me, as I have been bored by many an educationist before and since, with flourishes upon a subject which he gave Mr. Hill and myself full credit for comprehending. M. Charles Dupin said to Mackintosh, after a night in the House of Commons—"I heard not one word about the blessings of Liberty."—"No, no," replied Mackintosh, "we take all that for granted." So did Henry Brougham take for granted that he and I were in accord upon the subject of the Diffusion of Knowledge. He was then within a few days of the completion of his forty-seventh year; full of health

and energy—one who had been working without intermission in literature, in science, in law, in politics, for a quarter of a century, but one to whom no work seemed to bring fatigue; no tedious mornings of the King's Bench, no sleepless nights of the House of Commons, able to "stale his infinite variety." From that hour I felt more confidence in talking with perfect freedom to him who worthily filled so large a space in the world's eye, than to many a man of commonplaces, whose depths I had plumbed and had found them shallow. That first interview with Mr. Brougham was an event that had a marked influence upon many subsequent passages of my life.

It would be a fruitless and wearisome story of private affairs, were I to detail the circumstances under which my unfortunate "National Library," having been at first taken up by the Society of which Mr. Brougham was President, and negotiations having been opened with their publishers, was finally adopted by Mr. Murray, with an earnestness which was to me very assuring, after my long term of enforced idleness and dark apprehensions. The eminent West-end publisher was committed to the enterprise, by the issue of the Prospectus in his own name, which I had so carefully prepared. In my original Prospectus, which I had submitted to Mr. Murray in February, 1826, I had said, "It is our peculiar object to condense the information which is scattered through voluminous and expensive works, into the form and substance of Original Treatises." In the Prospectus issued on the 24th of December, it was set forth that "the divisions of Popular Knowledge in which the National Library is arranged, will

comprehend, in distinct Treatises, the most important branches of instruction and amusement. They will present the most valuable and interesting articles of an Encyclopædia, in a form accessible to every description of purchaser." This final Prospectus is printed, *in extenso*, in Goodhugh's "English Gentleman's Library Manual,"—published in May, 1827. Differences of opinion about the editorial responsibility of the series too soon arose. *Quis custodiet* was answered by the apparition of a very solemn divine, who talked as a "Sir Oracle." Arrangements regarding my old stock and copyrights, which it was considered—I may say perfectly understood—were to be taken at a valuation, when I was about to merge my business in the great house of Albemarle Street, presented new obstacles. Thus were my prospects clouded in a few weeks of 1827. I was heartsick at last, and abandoning the whole scheme left it for the imitation of others of more independent means. The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge produced their "Treatises" in March, and Messrs. Longman their Lardner's "Cabinet Cyclopædia" a few years afterwards. Mr. Murray, I had reason to believe, had become frightened at the magnitude of my plan. He several times said to me, "where will you find the men to write these books?" In my maturer experience I came to perceive that this was the real difficulty in such undertakings.

Let me hasten to close these recollections of the spring of 1827. Scott writes of old letters, somewhere in his Diary, "they rise up as scorpions to hiss at me." So may I write of the documents by which I trace this crisis of my life. My abortive efforts to begin a new career, shaking off future responsibilities

of trade, made the responsibilities which remained more onerous. My boat was stranded. Happily for me there were no wreckers at hand ready for the plunder of my damaged cargo. A private trust administered my affairs, whose only concern was to realize—to sell, to the best advantage, land, houses, newspaper, stock, copyrights. I would not be a burden. I would earn my own bread. I walked forth from my business homes in London and Windsor, after the fashion of a man represented in a wood-cut in a title-page of one of the old printers (I think it was a work of Budæus) which comes into my thoughts—a man, not bowed down by age or sorrow, moving forward, not briskly, but not unsteadily, with his stout staff, and his small wallet, and a label of four words, —"OMNIA MEA MECUM PORTO."

CHAPTER III.

I AM living at Brompton, with my wife and four little girls. The house which we have chosen in which to begin a new and unambitious life is in a narrow road, called Cromwell Lane, through which few people pass. Our long slip of garden is bounded on one side by the high wall of Cromwell House, the reputed mansion of the Protector. We are surrounded by nursery grounds. I can no longer find the place where I dwelt for two or three years. The few unpretending houses, nestling in snug gardens, have given place to squares, and rows, and to "Great Exhibition" buildings—themselves doomed prematurely to perish. Perchance I might discover some traces of the quiet corner if the humble tavern still remains that was once known as "The Hoop and Toy." Does the "Goat in Boots" still exist?—another landmark. The daughter of a very dear friend, who afterwards occupied our house, was eager to tell us that, when she visited the Exhibition of 1862, she rejoiced to find, in a small plot of ground not yet subdued to the tyranny of brick and mortar, a single apple-tree, which she could identify as the tree under which she had sat as a child, looking wistfully up at the ripening fruit. Why do I linger about this unpretentious abiding place of 1827? Because

it was, to me as a city of refuge. Here I first relinquished the hope of commercial success, having surrendered to others my commercial responsibilities. I had much for which to be grateful to the All-giver. I had preserved my bodily and mental health. I had domestic confidence and peace. The "precious jewel" in the toad's head was not undiscovered. I was determined to work, and I was equally resolved to be as happy as I could be. I did not repine at the turn of Fortune's wheel. Amongst some papers of this period I find a scrap on which I had written, —If the capacity to enjoy were commensurate with the power to possess, we then, indeed, might complain of the inequality of our conditions.

Looking back upon the summer of 1827, I have no recollection of such hours of gloom as belonged to the previous year. No unkindness wounded my pride; no desertion of old friends rendered me misanthropical. I had quickly obtained an engagement as a writer in Mr. Buckingham's new paper, "The Sphinx." High-priced as it was—a shilling—it had a considerable sale. I wrote political articles and reviews. At that time I was an enthusiast in public affairs. Canning was the head of a new administration. On the 1st of May I had stood in the crowded avenues of the House of Commons, and had seen for a moment his radiant face, as he rapidly mounted the old staircase which led to the lobby, about to take the foremost place, and vindicate his policy before many detractors and some new friends. There were whispered blessings upon many lips. In that triumph of the minister who had shaken off the shackles of the great Continental Powers, and had carried England "into the camp of progress and liberty," I

regarded the man as the "deliverer" described by Burke, in words almost profane in their idolatrous admiration. But I may look back upon that memorable occasion, and soberly say,—"Nor did he seem insensible to the best of all earthly rewards, the love and admiration of his fellow citizens. Hope elevated and joy brightened his crest."—[*Speech on American Taxation*, 1774.] On the 16th of August I saw him laid in his grave, in the north transept of Westminster Abbey. On the previous 20th of January, I had seen him standing for two hours of the bitterest night, upon the cold unmatted pavement of the nave of St. George's Chapel, at the funeral of the Duke of York. He did not take the precaution which he had suggested to Lord Eldon, to stand upon his cocked hat. That funeral broke up the delicate health of George Canning.

My course of journalism under Mr. James Silk Buckingham was not agreeable. Perhaps I had been too long my own master in such matters to brook control and criticism. Perhaps I formed too low an estimate of his knowledge and ability. His wonderful fluency as a platform speaker, pouring forth platitude after platitude, was calculated to catch the multitude. He has *written* scores of volumes in the same style, and I may ask "where are they?" I cared not how wearisome were his own newspaper prolusions; but I rebelled against his unparalleled conceit. He outraged me by presuming to alter, in his own obtuse fashion, some spirited lines on the death of Canning, which Praed had sent me. I at once quitted his office—where I had diligently laboured, and not without success—when he proposed an amended scale of remuneration for critiques

on new books, beginning at half-a-crown and rising to a guinea, according to the length of the article. I know not whether he found journeymen at this rate. I know not whether literature was degraded then, or is now, by the pretence of giving an opinion of a book amongst what are called "short notices," at the rate of threepence a line, to be earned by men who ought to have been hewers of wood and drawers of water. Happily a more worthy course of industry was opening for me. But before I enter upon the "passages" of an employment which was spread over nearly twenty years, let me glance at a temporary labour of 1827. What were then called "The Annuals" were introduced to England by Mr. Ackermann, in his "Forget-me-not" of 1822. Alaric Watts followed with his "Literary Souvenir." Samuel Carter Hall started "The Amulet," for the especial use of "serious persons." In 1827 I was asked to edit "Friendship's Offering." It was an enterprise hastily entered upon by Messrs. Smith and Elder, late in the season, and I had to obtain pictures for engraving, secure contributors, and see the book through the press in two or three months. The pleasantest thing about the engagement was that my friends of the "Quarterly Magazine," Mr. Praed and Mr. Moultrie, with others of their following, rallied round me, and contributed the most original pages of a volume, for which, like its rivals, there would be no lack of sentimental stories, and verses somewhat mawkish with their bowers and flowers. The most disagreeable thing was, that a blockhead behind the scenes, in the confidence of the publishers, took upon himself to change the title which Praed had given to his poem, and had it printed

as "The Red Fisherman" instead of "The Devil's Decoy." My friend had nearly quarrelled with me about this matter, in which I was really blameless. He had a right to be angry, for the poem was, I am inclined to think, his *chef-d'œuvre.* New Annuals started up, in the next and few following years, amongst the best of which was "The Anniversary," edited by Allan Cunningham, who had it in his power to make as good a book of this sort as could be produced, from the esteem with which he was regarded by the best writers and the best artists. There were Keepsakes, and Gems, and Bijous; but these delicate flowerets of the literary hotbed had a brief existence. They did more for the arts than for letters. They had set a great many people scribbling, who would never have dreamt of committing the sin of rhyme without such excitements, and they had compelled some of those who could write well to adopt a style anything but vigorous and original. They were perhaps right, and so were the editors and publishers. It was a period in which, except in a few rare instances, mediocrity was essentially necessary to great literary success. There was a poem entitled "The Omnipresence of the Deity," by one whose fame settled into the name of "the wrong Montgomery;" the good old champion of freedom, the *right* Montgomery, being then alive and honoured by all competent judges. It went rapidly through five or six editions. The "Excursion" had reached a second edition in ten years.

A document, which I value as a soldier who has seen long service values his first Commission, lies before me:—

"GENERAL MEETING of the Committee for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.—26th July, 1827.

"James Mill, Esq., in the Chair.

"Mr. Hill having informed the Committee that Mr. Charles Knight was willing to undertake the superintendence of the Society's Publications, it was

"Resolved,—

"That his services be accepted, and that it be referred to the Publication Committee to furnish him with the necessary instructions."

At that time the only publications of the Society were the Treatises of the "Library of Useful Knowledge," issued fortnightly in sixpenny numbers. The Series had been commenced in the Spring, with Mr. Brougham's "Discourse on the Objects, Advantages, and Pleasures of Science." The sale of this work had been as extraordinary as its merits were striking and almost unexampled. Some called it superficial, because it touched rapidly upon many departments of scientific knowledge; but the more just conclusion was that it was the work of "a full man," who had not laboriously elaborated this fascinating treatise out of books recently studied or hastily referred to, but had poured it forth out of the accumulated wealth of his rich treasury of knowledge. No reader to whom the subjects treated of were in any degree new could read this little book without feeling an ardent desire to know more—to know all. Such were my own feelings as I devoured this tract on the outside of an Aylesbury coach, and bitterly regretted that upon mere business considerations I had lost the chance of becoming intimate with the author of such a book, as his fellow-labourer in the work of popular enlightenment. It could scarcely be expected that many other Treatises could have the same attraction

as this Preliminary Discourse. They were to be manuals for self-education—clear, accurate, but not to be mastered without diligence and perseverance. Their success made it clear that there was a great body of students—whether in Colleges or Mechanics' Institutes, in busy towns or quiet villages, to whom such guides would be welcome. My duties, in connexion with this Series, were scarcely more than ministerial. I had to read manuscripts and give an opinion upon them, although the decision did not rest with me but with the Committee. Upon the higher scientific subjects I was not competent to give an opinion as regarded their correctness, but I could judge how far they were adapted for popular use. I was thus what the Germans, I believe, call a *vorleser*. Proofs went through my hands as they passed the Committee, and the printers were kept up to their work. I could not reasonably shrink from this drudgery, for I saw men of high station and literary eminence —statesmen, lawyers, physicians, willingly performing it. It was not necessary that I should regularly attend at the Offices of the Society in Furnival's Inn; but I had often to confer with Mr. Coates, the active and intelligent Secretary of the Society, and to attend some meetings of the general and special Committees. I gradually came to form a just estimate of the individual characters and qualifications of those with whom I was brought in contact. I found them, collectively, very different from provincial Committees of which I had once had some experience —earnest in the pursuit of a common object; not intent upon personal display or the assertion of petty self-importance; men of cultivated minds, each treating the opinions of the others with respect; the most

capable amongst them the most modest; in a word, gentlemen and scholars. I felt that it depended upon myself some day to win their confidence in a position of higher responsibility than my early labours demanded.

In these pursuits, the summer of 1827 wore away. I was not without my pleasures. I delighted to walk in Kensington Gardens, sometimes on a holiday afternoon with my elder girls—more frequently in the early morning on my way to town. Glancing—in the intervals of my present task of reviving old memories,—at the work of a poet who ought to be more widely known, I find these lines:—

> "Once as I stray'd a student, happiest then,
> What time the summer's garniture was on,
> Beneath the princely shades of Kensington,
> A girl I spied, whose years might number ten,
> With full round eyes, and fair soft English face."*

In such a season, when the sun was scarcely high enough to have dried up the dews of Kensington's green alleys, as I passed along the broad central walk, I saw a group on the lawn before the Palace, which, to my mind, was a vision of exquisite loveliness. The Duchess of Kent, and her daughter, whose years then numbered nine, are breakfasting in the open air—a single page attending upon them at a respectful distance—the matron looking on with eyes of love, whilst the "fair soft English face" is bright with smiles. The world of fashion is not yet astir. Clerks and mechanics, passing onward to their occupations, are few; and they exhibit nothing of

* "Lays of Middle Age;" by James Hedderwick, 1859.

that vulgar curiosity which I think is more commonly found in the class of the merely rich, than in the ranks below them in the world's estimation. What a beautiful characteristic it seemed to me of the training of this royal girl, that she should not have been taught to shrink from the public eye—that she should not have been burthened with a premature conception of her probable high destiny—that she should enjoy the freedom and simplicity of a child's nature—that she should not be restrained when she starts up from the breakfast-table and runs to gather a flower in the adjoining parterre—that her merry laugh should be as fearless as the notes of the thrush in the groves around her. I passed on and blessed her; and I thank God that I have lived to see the golden fruits of such training.

At this period the Almanacs of the Stationers' Company were published within a few days of Lord Mayor's Day, the 9th of November. Before their issue, the Master and other magnates of the Company used to go in their barge to Lambeth, to present copies of all their Almanacs to the Archbishop of Canterbury. In Erskine's famous Speech in 1779, when Lord North brought a Bill into the House of Commons for re-vesting in the Stationers' Company a monopoly which had been declared illegal by the Court of Common Pleas in 1775, he adverted to "the episcopal revision" which formerly existed, when the Universities, as well as the Stationers' Company, were alone authorised to print Almanacs. "It is notorious," said the great advocate, "that the Universities sell their right to the Stationers' Company for a fixed annual sum; and it is equally notorious, that the Stationers' Company

make a scandalous job of the bargain; and to increase the sale of Almanacs amongst the vulgar, publish, under the auspices of religion and learning, the most senseless absurdities." His respect for the House, he said, prevented him from citing some sentences from the one hundred and thirteenth of the series of Poor Robin's Almanac, published under the revision of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London. "The worst part of Rochester is ladies' reading, compared with them." The monopoly of 1779 was destroyed. But the powerful Company bought off the competitors who rose up from time to time. They had become possessed in 1827 of an exclusive market for stamped Almanacs; and, in the absence of all competition, the absurdities and the indecencies flourished as vigorously as when Erskine denounced them half a century before. The solemn farce was still enacted once a year of laying these productions at the feet of the Primate, when "episcopal revision" for state purposes was as extinct as the Star Chamber. They were still, as Erskine described the ancient mockery, to be "sanctified by the blessings of the bishops."

I had long been conversant with the character of these productions. Upon the day of their publication for the year 1828 I bought them all, and eagerly applied myself to discover if they had become more adapted to the improving intelligence of the age. First, there was "Francis Moore, Physician," who had commenced his career of imposture in 1698. He then dated his productions "from the sign of Lilly's Head, in Crown Court, near Cupid's Bridge, in Lambeth parish;" where he advertised for sale "his famous familiar family

cathartick and diuretick purging pills." Here the "author also cures all sorts of agues at once;" and he adds, in the true spirit of his almanac, "this distemper often comes by supernatural means, which is the reason it will not yield to natural means." In 1827, when the Almanac stamp was fifteen pence, the people of England, calling themselves enlightened, voluntarily taxed themselves to pay an annual sum of fifteen thousand pounds to the government, for permission to read the unchanged trash which first obtained currency and belief when every village had its witch and every churchyard its ghost—when agues were cured by charms, and stolen spoons discovered by incantation. Surely it was full time that "Francis Moore, Physician," should be boldly dealt with. No common assaults would do. He would survive ridicule, as "Partridge's Almanack" survived the wicked wit of Swift, although Bickerstaff had killed the real Almanac for a season, and frightened the seer from ever attempting to set it up again. The Stationers' Company were not to be so beaten; and they had the impudence to publish a "Partridge's Almanack" with a portrait of the discomfited astrologer, which he refused to acknowledge, obstinately persisting not to prophesy in the flesh. The Company evoked the ghost of Partridge to do the needful work, and the Almanac for 1828 bore this motto,—"*Etiam mortuus loquitur.*" Another astrological Almanac, "Season on Seasons," still existed for 1828, modelled after the fashion of the palmy days of Lilly and Gadbury. "Moore Improved," particularly adapted for farmers and country gentlemen, was as impudent in his astrology as his great ancestor. All the Almanacs

of the Stationers' Company had their prophecies that on a particular day of the coming year it would rain or shine—that there would be "good weather for the hay season in July, and in August fine harvest weather about the middle of the month." In Swift's wonderful piece of solemn humour, the account of Partridge's death, he makes the old sinner confess his "impositions on the people," and say, "We have a common form for all these things: as to foretelling the weather, we never meddle with that, but leave it to the printer, who takes it out of any old almanac as he thinks fit." This, which looks like a mere joke in 1709, was easy of proof in 1827, by comparing the Almanac of the reign of Charles II. with the Almanac of George II., and both with the Almanac of George IV. The only variation in the weather prophecies was in "Poor Robin's Almanac" for 1828, when he closed his hundred and sixty-eighth year, a drivelling idiot, still clinging to his old filth. Could any reader of this day imagine that in the year when the London University was opened, and the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge was beginning its work, he could find these lines at the head of the Calendar for January?

"If it don't snow
I don't care.
But if it freezes,
It may as it pleases
And then I sneezes,
And my nose blow."

Armed with such materials, I immediately went to work, to elaborate the scheme of a rational and useful

Almanac. It was completed in a few days, and I took it to my steady friend, Matthew Hill. We went together to Westminster, to consult Mr. Brougham. What an incalculable source of satisfaction to a projector, even of so apparently humble a work as an Almanac, to find a man of ardent and capacious mind, quick to comprehend, frank to approve, not deeming a difficult undertaking impossible, ready not only for counsel but for action. "It is now the middle of November," said the rapid genius of unprocrastinating labour—"can you have your Almanac out before the end of the year?" "Yes; with a little help in the scientific matters." "Then tell Mr. Coates to call a meeting of the General Committee at my chambers, at half-past eight to-morrow morning. You shall have help enough. There's Lubbock and Wrottesley and Daniel and Beaufort—you may have your choice of good men for your astronomy and meteorology, your tides and your eclipses. Go to work, and never fear." The market-gardeners of Brompton were scarcely yet astir when I started to walk to Lincoln's Inn. The morning was dismal; the road was solitary. When I reached the top of Sloane Street, I was encountered by a dense fog—so heavy that I remember feeling my way by the iron railings in front of Apsley House, and so groping through Piccadilly. I began to despair of keeping the appointment which I deemed so important. But I persevered. That fog seemed to me as a type of the difficulties that I might have to encounter in this novel attempt, and in the realization of other projects floating in my mind. In Mr. Brougham's chambers there was assembled a quorum of the Committee. The energy of the Chairman swept away

every doubt. The work was committed to my charge. The aid which had been suggested to me was freely given. I remembered the sarcastic exclamation of Erskine, when he was contending against the re-establishment of the usurped monopoly of the Universities—"Is it imagined that our Almanacs are to come to us, in future, in the classical arrangement of Oxford,—fraught with the mathematics and astronomy of Cambridge?" It might be so with one Almanac *not* "printed with the correct type of the Stationers' Company." Our supporters would little care for the pretence, still kept up, that the responsibility of that Company prevented the inconveniences that might arise to the public from mistakes in the matters that Almanacs contained. A constant friend through many years, the hydrographer of the Admiralty, Captain Beaufort, found a gentleman in his office who quickly prepared the various astronomical tables. There were senior wranglers, "fraught with the mathematics and astronomy of Cambridge," whose names had been rapidly mentioned to me by Mr. Brougham, ready to look over the proofs. I arranged the business terms with the Finance Committee of the Society, upon the principle of paying a rent upon the numbers sold. "*The British Almanac*" was published before the 1st of January. Late as it was in the field, high as was its unavoidable price—half-a-crown, to cover the heavy stamp duty, and allow a profit to the retailers—ten thousand were sold in a week. I had thus encouragement to propose a collateral scheme to the Society. In their Annual Report issued at the beginning of February, was this announcement:—"A *Companion to the Almanac* is in the press, which will treat of many important

branches of knowledge." The pair have travelled on together for thirty-seven years under my direction, through many changes of times and men—through many a social revolution, bloodless and beneficent—through a wonderful era of progress in commerce, in literature, in science, in the arts—in the manifestations of the approach of all ranks to that union of interests and feelings which is the most solid foundation of public happiness, and the best defence against assaults from without. The general features of these publications have undergone very little change during this long period. The two objects which have been always kept in view in the preparation of the "Companion" were set forth in 1828:—"1st. That the subjects selected shall be generally useful, either for present information or future reference. 2ndly. That the knowledge conveyed shall be given in the most condensed and explicit manner, so as to be valuable to every class of readers."

Let me mention, before I quit this subject of the high-priced Almanacs of 1828, that the Stationers' Company had long had to struggle against more formidable competitors even than the Useful Knowledge Society. The United Kingdom was inundated with *unstamped* Almanacs. Mr. Henry Mayhew bears his testimony to this inevitable consequence of an enormous duty upon any article of luxury or necessity. A street-seller of memorandum books told him that the almanac street trade "was a capital trade once before the duty was taken off—capital! The duty was not in our way, so much as in the shopkeepers', though *they* did a good deal on the sly in unstamped almanacs. . . . Anything that way when Government's *done* has a ready

sale."* In 1833, I sent out a circular letter to each of my agents in the great towns, for the purpose of ascertaining some facts relating to the sale of unstamped almanacs. On their authority I was enabled to state, in a Report which led to the total repeal of the Almanac Duty, that, throughout the midland and northern counties, and also in the south and west of England, unstamped almanacs, principally in the sheet form, but in some places stitched as books, are hawked about the towns and villages, and openly as well as privately sold in shops. In Scotland a much larger sale of unstamped almanacs, known as Aberdeen or Belfast Almanacs, regularly took place. Those in the book form, containing from twenty to twenty-four pages, were sold at the price of a penny, twopence, or threepence. The "Belfast Annual Prognosticator" for 1829, price threepence, is now before me. It contains a great variety of information; it has no astrology; and if its "droll stories" are somewhat dull, they are not indecent. "The Paddy's Watch," a penny street almanac, has weather predictions, but no prophecies of political events, and its only approach to quackery is a recipe to cure the cramp. Clearly the low-priced and illegal almanac trade was conducted with more regard to the morals and intelligence of the people than the impostures and indecencies of the Stationers' Company.

Parliament was opened on the 29th of January, 1828. The administration which had survived its brilliant chief, Mr. Canning, was broken up; but Mr. Peel, who had returned to his post of Home

* "London Labour and London Poor," Vol. I. p. 271.

Secretary, caring not "for the dissatisfaction of ultra-Tories," and feeling that the nation could no longer be governed by "country gentlemen," had succeeded in the formation of a mixed government, under the Duke of Wellington as prime-minister. Mr. Brougham, at the opening of the session, declared his opinion in the debate upon the address, that it was unconstitutional that almost the whole patronage of the State should be placed in the hands of a military premier. The concluding passage of his speech ran through the country, and dwelt for ever in men's minds in its axiomatic power. "There had been periods when the country heard with dismay that the soldier was abroad. That is not the case now. Let the soldier be ever so much abroad in the present age, he could do nothing. There is another person abroad—a less important person, in the eyes of some an insignificant person, whose labours have tended to produce this state of things —the schoolmaster is abroad." Within a week of this declaration came out the Annual Report of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge—a body labouring with him who had been amongst the foremost of those who had set the schoolmaster to a greater work than his routine tasks of a previous generation. That Report said: "The success which has attended the labours of the Committee, to make the most useful and the most exalted truths of science easily and generally accessible, great as it has been, was not unexpected by any who reflected upon the desire of knowledge, happily so signal a characteristic of this age. It has encouraged them to extend their efforts, and to leave nothing undone, until knowledge has become as plentiful and as universally diffused

as the air we breathe." This was a bold declaration—a solemn pledge. I felt carried along with it, to be up and be doing. Even as John Day, one of our great printers of the sixteenth century, took for his mark an emblematic device of the day-spring of the Reformed religion, with the motto, "Arise, for it is Day," would I work in the spirit of this pledge, till the wide fields of knowledge should become the inheritance of all. Why should I despair? I also was filled with an enthusiastic hope that the time would come, when the progress of civilisation should accomplish for the intellectual world something like what it had done, and was doing, for the physical. As vineyards were smiling upon spots of France which were inaccessible to the legions of Cæsar, so would the vines and fig-trees of knowledge shoot up, in the place of those forests of pedantry, and that undergrowth of weeds and brambles, where common sense could never pierce. In March, I became a part proprietor of "The London Magazine." In the first number of a new Series for April, I wrote an article on the "Education of the People." I venture upon a somewhat too long extract, justified, perhaps, by the belief that there is still much work to do, and always will be, for the labourers in this inexhaustible soil.

> "That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do."

Thus, then, I spoke some plain words in 1828; when I was at work in the preparation of a series announced by the Society in their report, "The Library of Entertaining Knowledge":—

"Nothing but a very narrow view of the actual

state of intelligence amongst the British people would limit any scheme of popular instruction to the labouring classes only. It is true, that the majority of these have been educated in the National, or Lancastrian, or old Free Schools, and that there they have learned little beyond a pretty general acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, writing, and the commonest elements of arithmetic. But they are thrown into the world, and they find they must *think*, either to rise out of their own rank, or to be respectable amongst the class in which they were born. And how much better off, in point of real knowledge, are the sons of the middle classes, who at fifteen are placed in attorney's offices, or behind the counters of the draper or the druggist? They have been taught to write and read; they have fagged at arithmetic for seven years, under the wretched old boarding-school system, without having attained the remotest conception of its philosophy; they are worse than ignorant of History and Geography; of science they never heard, except when they saw Mr. Walker's Eidouranion in the Christmas holidays; their literature is confined to a few corrupting novels, the bequest of the Minerva press to the circulating library of the last age. Shall we say that the children of the rich and the noble—*par excellence*, the *educated* classes—have nothing to learn? 'What is the best system of education in Europe?' said an anxious enquirer to Talleyrand. His answer was, 'The public education of England. *Elle est exécrable.*' Why then should we talk of addressing popular literature to the *working classes* only. We *all* want Popular Literature—we all want to get at real and substantial knowledge by the most compen-

dious processes. We are all too ignorant, (except those with whom learning is the business of life,) of the wonders of Nature which we see around us —of the discoveries of Science and Philosophy—of our own minds—of the real History of past ages—of the manners and political condition of the other members of the great human family. Our acquaintance with our own noble literature is superficial and ill-digested; we have scarcely patience to winnow the corn from the husks. But we are all tasked, some by our worthless ambitions and engrossing pleasures—most by our necessary duties—by our daily labour whether in professions, or trades, or handicraft. We are ashamed of our ignorance—we cannot remain in it; but we have not time to attain any sound knowledge upon the ancient principle of reading doggedly through a miscellaneous library, even if we had the opportunity. The problem now to be solved is, how to accommodate the growing desire of all persons for solid information, to the overwhelming necessity which presses upon all persons to labour, almost to the utmost stretch of their faculties, in their peculiar vocations."

Before I got fairly to work in the preparatory stages of the "Library of Entertaining Knowledge," I had the pleasure of performing an acceptable service for Mr. Brougham. He had requested me to take notes of a speech he was about to make in the House of Commons, on the subject of Reforms in the Courts of Common Law. The object of this arrangement was to produce a volume, that should stand as a permanent record of the comprehensive views of the Law Reformer, upon those abuses which were felt by

every man who was constrained to seek for justice in the Courts of King's Bench, Common Pleas, or Exchequer. The magnitude of the details was such as to deter any man from approaching them for legislative consideration, except the one man who could grasp them all, marshal them in due order, and bind the whole together by the power of philosophic generalization. My business would be to compare all the reports of the daily papers, to add from my own notes, to introduce documents, and to carry the book through the press after the orator had examined this version of his great effort. On the afternoon of the 7th of February I am waiting the arrival of Mr. Brougham in the Lobby of the House of Commons. He soon arrives, in company with Mr. Serjeant Wilde. A little delay ensues, before the Speaker sends the orders for our admission under the Gallery. Mr. Serjeant Wilde and I sat together for six hours, listening to this extraordinary display of mental and physical energy;—the orator never wearied, the listeners never wearying. During the whole time, from five o'clock till eleven, there were no signs of impatience in an audience always impatient of tediousness. The speaker's powers of memory in dealing with technical facts,—his readiness in massing these complicated details so as to make them tell upon his general argument,—his delivery, now familiar and jocose, now impressive and almost solemn,—these qualities held many of the listeners from the first hour to the last, when the magnificent peroration sent many home with the hope, if not the resolve, that law should be no longer dear but cheap; not a sealed book, but a living letter; not the patrimony of the rich, but the inheritance of the poor; not the

two-edged sword of craft and oppression, but the staff of honesty and the shield of innocence.

Mr. Brougham had necessarily to encounter a good deal of obloquy when he assailed those absurdities of special pleading which he terms "the venerable formalities of the art." They are gone, for the most part. The ghosts of the antique fooleries that were taught in a Pleader's office were exorcised from that night of the 7th of February. Not for much longer would John Brown, complainant in an assault which consisted in lifting a finger against him, be made to declare that William Smith, "with a certain stick, and with his fists, gave and struck the said John a great many violent blows and strokes on and about his head, face, breast, back, shoulders, arms, legs, and divers other parts of his body; and also, then and there, with great force and violence, shook and pulled about him the said John, and cast and threw him, the said John, down to and upon the ground, and then and there violently kicked the said John, and gave and struck him a great many other blows and strokes; and also, then and there, with great force and violence, rent, tore, and damaged the clothes and wearing apparel, to wit, one coat, one waistcoat, one pair of breeches, one cravat, one shirt, one pair of stockings, and one hat, of the said John, of great value, to wit, of the value of £50, which he the said John then and there wore and was clothed with." This for a sample of the mystical worship of the Priests of the Law, before Common Sense had pulled down their idols.

A fortnight after this memorable evening in the House of Commons, I was present at a large dinner in Goodman's Fields. It was an occasion really

worthy of a celebration, for it was given on the completion of a new Theatre in that populous district where, in 1741, David Garrick had first appeared before a London audience, in the character of Richard the Third. This was, to some extent, the classic ground of the drama. The Brunswick Theatre had been built on the site of that old one called the Royalty, which was burnt down in 1826. I was at this dinner by the invitation of the proprietors; for I had not only known one of them, Mr. Maurice, a printer of Fenchurch Street, as a man of ability and taste, but the architect was one of my most intimate friends. This new Theatre at Wellclose Square was, undoubtedly, the most elegant of the minor theatres. Its beauty and its commodiousness bade fair to give Stedman Whitwell a rank in his profession which those who appreciated his abilities warmly anticipated. At that dinner I sat by the side of Clarkson Stanfield. His truly honourable career, from the position of a sailor before the mast, whose talent as an untaught artist was employed in painting scenes for the theatrical performances of the crew, was commonly known. He had won his way from the painting-room of the Royalty Theatre, to be ranked, in 1828, amongst the most striking exhibitors of landscape and marine pieces in the British Institution and the Society of British Artists; but he did not disdain to lend his aid to the attractions of a stage which had arisen out of the ashes of that school of picturesque effect, where he had toiled to obtain a mastery of his art scarcely to be reached in the routine of academical studies. I sat in pleasant talk, during a cheerful evening, with the genial and intelligent young man

who had served in the ship in which Douglas Jerrold was a midshipman. There was another rising artist in that dining-room, who had received a more regular education in an Academy of Art at Edinburgh; but who, in coming to London about 1822, had worked as the colleague of Stanfield as a scene-painter. David Roberts was also giving his zealous professional aid to the new enterprise. The Theatre was opened on the 25th of February. I was present at the second performance, when there was a full audience. Some critical judges had come to this extreme East, to marvel at a building of singular elegance which had started up in seven months in a district where sailors and Jews abounded;—more plenteous, it may be, than the classes who might be supposed likely to appreciate performances not wanting in any of the scenic arrangements of what was then called, with some truth, the legitimate drama.

I was sitting at work in the room assigned to me at the office of the Society, in Percy Street, about mid-day on Tuesday the 29th, when the clerk of Mr. Whitwell came in, pale and haggard, to ask if I knew where he could find his principal—for the Brunswick Theatre had fallen down. He implored me, if I saw him, to dissuade him from going near the place, for the people would tear him in pieces, the loss of life had been so great. I hurried to the neighbourhood. As I approached the scene of the calamity, the crowd gradually became more dense. I could not get near what had been the front of the building, for the wall had fallen outwards, and had destroyed in its ruins many houses on the opposite side of the street. The groans and shrieks of the multitude were appalling, as some dead or wounded man or woman was carried

through the throng. The principal sufferers were actors and actresses, who were assembled on the stage to commence a rehearsal. There were also carpenters and other artisans employed about the building. I learnt, to my great grief, that Mr. Maurice, in whose company I had dined a short time before, was amongst the killed.

There was at that time a very popular dissenting preacher in that neighbourhood—the minister of the London Mariners' Church—commonly called "Boson Smith." He published a remarkable Tract "to improve the occasion;" in which he gave a very graphic description of what he saw and did; for he was one of the first amongst the spectators. There are few things in fiction more exciting than the following incident in a scene of terror:—"I saw a female death-like figure bursting from the further end of the ruins; and filled with horror, not knowing what to do. Some men ran to her. I called out to them to help her over the ruins; they brought her to the edge of the floor near the wall of the portico, and I raised her up on the floor, the people still digging in the hole by the door-way to release the poor labourers, lest the ruins should fall on them. I entreated her to sit down a minute; her hair was dishevelled, her apparel variously torn, the side of her face covered with blood, and she supported her head against my arm until I could get a clear passage for her to pass; she cried out, 'Oh! do let me go; oh, send some one to my sister's to say I am alive; oh, how grateful I ought to be, that my life is preserved!'" There are few things in fanaticism more wanting in charity than the preacher's reply:—"I said, 'Yes, it is a mercy indeed: you will have to

thank God for it as long as you live. You would not die in a theatre of all other places! I hope you will obtain some other mode of life!'"

When I went to my home at Brompton in the evening I found Mr. Whitwell there; and he then prepared a most clear and convincing statement, which was published the next day, to vindicate himself from the charge of having been careless of the public safety. He had previously written to Sir Robert Peel, as Secretary of State, praying him to direct a rigid inquiry into the causes of the accident. The inquest, under the authority of the Coroner for the Royalty of the Tower, was prolonged for nearly six weeks; and the issue clearly established the assertion of the architect, that the accident was the result of an interference with his professional responsibility, by adding to his building erections over which he had no control whatever, and against which he repeatedly protested. Such a calamity as this, it may be presumed, cannot now arise under the regulations of the Building Act. But it is certain that accidents as frightful may occur, in theatres, in concert-rooms, and more especially in churches and chapels, from the indifference that is manifested as to the effects of narrow passages and staircases when a crowd is seized with any sudden alarm. The Boson Smiths may have some day in England cause to see that there is no Special Providence for places of worship, when the lessons of prudence are set at nought, any more than for playhouses and music-halls.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE evening of the 21st of May, 1828, I am comfortably dining in the coffee-room of a commercial inn at Birmingham, resting for a night after a day's coach journey. It is not an exclusive apartment devoted to the class of travellers then popularly known as "bagmen"; but there are so many great-coats, whips, and business-looking packages scattered about, that I am well satisfied to have taken up my quarters amongst the guests who are served the best and charged the least. In the manufacturing districts I have always found that the society of the "Commercial-room" is of a superior order to that met with in similar resorts of the country towns of the South. It is more common in the North for the principals of a firm to travel, for the twofold object of buying in the cheapest market, and selling in the dearest. Although I had no trade purposes to accomplish in this journey, I did not shrink from gaining information amongst men habitually communicative, and, naturally enough, asking plain questions themselves of a stranger who has come amongst them. Thus, on my first tour amongst the manufacturing districts, this inquiry has been put to me,—"Pray, sir, what do you travel in?" "In Useful Knowledge, sir." My answer was literally true at Birmingham. I was on my way to Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, York, Sheffield, Derby, Notting-

ham (returning by Birmingham), to organize Local Committees of the Society with which I had become so intimately connected.

What pleasant remembrances are associated in my mind with journeys—not too long, and not by night —on the outside of a fast coach. On that May morning, when I was starting upon an important tour that would demand judgment and energy for the due discharge of the business with which I was entrusted—and yet a pleasure trip, because disembarrassed of commercial responsibility—my spirits rose as if the days of anxious drudgery were overpast. My portfolio was filled with letters of introduction to persons of station and influence. They would open my way to the best society of these great commercial communities. I had moreover letters to his manufacturing connexions from a great millionaire, who in a few years ceased to be a member of our Committee. He came to my house, and begging, as he seated himself in my private room, that I would also take a seat, delivered the papers to me with the air of a sovereign giving his credentials to an ambassador. I did not find them very influential. The new-mown grass of the fields around Highgate—over which the burnt clay had not yet strode to conquest after conquest—was wooing the morning sun; the hawthorn hedges were in blossom. We creep up the hill of St. Albans, which, twelve centuries before, had made the monk of Jarrow poetical about flowery slopes. We dash along through Dunstable, without the opportunity of resting there to eat a lark, as was the wont when the bar travelled in post-chaises. We rattle over the rough stones of the narrow streets of Coventry. In twelve hours we have reached

Birmingham. The next morning I am on my way to Liverpool by an early coach. Another ride of continued enjoyment. The coal-fields and furnaces of Staffordshire are not picturesque, but to me they had the charm of novelty. The Lyme was not to be compared to my own familiar Thames, but the bustle and dinginess of its banks had their associations with the beautiful and useful products of the Potteries. Warrington was worthy of notice in connexion with some of the works of the Duke of Bridgwater, and his famous engineering wonders that had then no rivals in the grandeur of railway engineering. The bright day has softened into twilight before I am in Liverpool. Twenty-four hours upon the road from London to Liverpool in 1828; five hours and a half in 1864! Wondrous gain for the accomplishment of the chief objects of human industry—for cheapening and equalizing the prices of commodities—for bringing the producer and the consumer together in the world's great markets—for rooting up local prejudices, and making one family of twenty millions of people. But—vain regret—I shall never more rejoice, as old Sam Johnson rejoiced, in the independent ride of a hundred miles in a post-chaise; or, what was more to my fancy, the privilege, well purchased for half-a-crown, of occupying the box-seat of a "Dart," or a "Regulator," or a "Defiance," or an "Express"; interested in the rapid change of horses; listening to the coachman's estimate of the squire or the parson, as we gallop through many a pretty village; well satisfied with the quarter of an hour for dinner, which may be judiciously prolonged ten minutes by inviting the lord of the box to a glass after his rapid meal; and, to complete the after-

noon's delight, a cigar in the balmy air, without what Burns describes, with reference to another sin, "the hazard of concealing,"—an enjoyment of latter days not altogether safe, even though the railway porter should have suspended the exercise of two of his five senses.

The Liverpool of 1864 is as different in its physical aspects from the Liverpool of 1828, as it was at that time a much grander and richer place than the "quondam village," described by Lord Erskine,—"now fit to be a proud capital for any empire in the world, which has started up, like an enchanted palace, even in the memory of living men." But Liverpool can scarcely be said to have risen "like an exhalation." It has ever been growing. The "Lyrpole" described by Leland as "a paved town which hath but a chapel," became an independent parish with a church in 1699, and in a century and a half of progress had more than a hundred places of worship. Its six thousand inhabitants at the beginning of the eighteenth century mounted up to four hundred and forty thousand in the sixth decade of the nineteenth. But the Liverpool which I looked upon in 1828 was in a state of transition. It was a place for commercial adventurers of every kind; but its commerce had scarcely then assumed the magnificent proportions of its great characteristic features. Twenty-two years only had passed since the rival of Bristol in the slave trade had a hundred and eleven vessels employed in that detestable traffic; and when the Whigs, during their short term of power, effected its abolition, there were many who thought that the sun of Liverpool's prosperity was set. The Cotton Trade

was to do a vast deal more for the great port of the Mersey than the trade in human flesh—far more even than its tobacco trade. But the commerce of Liverpool was in its infancy thirty-six years ago. Steam had surprisingly enlarged its traffic with Ireland; but no steam-vessel had yet crossed the Atlantic. Canals had opened cheap communication with the great seats of manufacture; but railways were not as yet. Nevertheless this busy place, scarcely second to London in its commercial activity, presented to me a series of remarkable objects, as novel as they were interesting and suggestive.

My especial business, however, was with the intellectual and moral aspects of Liverpool, rather than with its material characteristics. There were new docks forming; new streets and squares springing up all around the old town; the first stone of a new Custom-house had just been laid. There were then large open places, now covered with shops and warehouses. There was no rival on the Cheshire shore. Birkenhead was a village of a few straggling houses. In Liverpool there was growth rapid and decided. On the opposite bank of the Mersey there was scarcely yet a promise of growth. On a Sunday evening I walked amidst holiday folks through green lanes which have given place to long lines of quays and docks.

There was one work which for me had a fascinating interest—the tunnel of the railway which was then in course of formation. I saw the blasting of the solid rock near the shaft at which I entered. I was led on many wearisome paces to another shaft, at which I was to mount to daylight. I was far higher up the steep ascent than at my place of entrance. I

had been walking in the tunnel beneath houses that stood as securely as before, sewers that still emptied themselves, gas-pipes that still conveyed their unfailing light. Such a triumph of engineering was then a wonder. When it was proposed, wise men shook their heads. They were still doubtful whether the conveyance of goods could be cheapened by the railway to Manchester. It had not entered into the conception of the projectors of the railway, that they could carry passengers a journey of thirty miles in an hour. The locomotive was as yet little more than a dream.

The gentlemen at Liverpool to whom I had letters of introduction were active and zealous promoters of education. A Local Association in connection with the Useful Knowledge Society was formed, of which Dr. Traill, an eminent physician, was the chairman. I learnt through him that many individuals who at first affected to underrate *cheap philosophy* had begun to alter their tone; and that the mechanics connected with the Liverpool Institution read and purchased the Treatises. "We have had," he said in a letter, "a few clerical opponents, and one lately preached against Mechanics' Institutions, and the diffusion of philosophical instruction, so as to be accessible to the lower orders. The London University is usually coupled with these obnoxious innovations in the minds of such alarmists, as a part of a great system that is to overthrow the altar and the throne." Of our Local Association, Mr. J. Mulleneux, a most intelligent and ardent young man, was the treasurer. In the formation of this Association I had to experience, at breakfasts and dinners, the abundance of Liverpool hospitality. The tone of

society, with a slight touch of ostentation, was refined and intellectual. Roscoe had made it understood that literary acquirements were not incompatible with mercantile pursuits. I had seen the leading men of Liverpool upon 'Change, and I had rejoiced to view the evidence of their tastes in their libraries and pictures. But there was no exercise of hospitality that gave me more pleasure than that I derived from a visit to the Rev. W. Shephard, at Gatacre. Here he received a few pupils, and strove to make them happy as well as learned. He delighted in his pretty garden and his valuable collection of books. His dinner was plain but excellent. He was full of ready humour and ever-present cheerfulness. Many an anecdote did he tell me of political and literary men—of Canning and Brougham when they were candidates for the representation of Liverpool—of Roscoe, and of Hazlitt, who often came to see him. He was an ardent and somewhat unsparing Whig partisan,—I should rather say a partisan in liberal politics. His wit, his eloquence, were necessary occasionally in Liverpool, where some men were crying "No Popery"; and others—amongst whom was a contributor to the same "Annual" in which Mr. Shephard wrote—considered "universal education a new and hazardous experiment." Upon the whole I had a very pleasant visit to Liverpool. I had talked with men of marked ability, besides those I have named,—with Mr. Panizzi; with Mr. Rushton, then a rising local barrister, who had the tribute of Cobbett to his eloquence as "Roaring Ned." I formed an intimacy or two that was lasting, such as that of Mr. Ashton Yates. I had plenty of employment, and I looked upon a world different from that

to which I had been accustomed. I fear that I did not deaden my sense of enjoyment by penetrating into the dwellings of the Liverpool poor—into those Cellars which were then its opprobrium, and which are still, they say, as disgraceful as the Labourers' Cottages of the South.

My next scene of action was Manchester. It was not an inviting place for a stranger to wander about in, but I soon found willing guides and cordial friends. It was not always very easy to interest the busy mill-owners in the objects for which I came amongst them. Some were too absorbed in their ledgers to hear long explanations. Others were wholly indifferent to matters which had no relation to the business of their lives. I persevered; and chiefly by the exertions of a very earnest man, Mr. George William Wood (who became the first member for Manchester in the Reformed Parliament), a Local Association was formed on the 6th of June. Mr. Wood was its Chairman, Mr. Benjamin Heywood its Treasurer, and a most energetic solicitor, Mr. Winstanley, its Secretary. Names famous in Manchester Commerce are to be found in the List of the Committee, which is before me—Ewart, Greg, Houldsworth, Kennedy, Crossley, Sharp; men of science, Dr. Henry, Dr. Charles Henry, Dr. Kay. Dissent was represented by two members; but the Established Church sent no clergyman amongst us. I was requested to call upon some dozen gentlemen of the number chosen, for the purpose of answering questions and meeting objections. Some I saw at their factories; where I was shown all the wonders of their machinery. I walked home with some to their villas, to partake that plenteous meal of the North which is called

tea. The dinner of Manchester was at one o'clock, except on occasions of ceremony. The contrast between the hospitality of Liverpool and Manchester was most striking. I am not sure that I did not prefer the simplicity of the one to the display of the other. On the 5th of June Mr. Brougham had given "The Schoolmaster" as a toast at a dinner of the London Mechanics' Institution. It was a watchword when I went about with my friends to advocate the Diffusion of Knowledge.

When I visited Manchester in 1828, five years were to elapse before children and young persons working in factories would be protected by law from working an unreasonable number of hours, and when Government Inspectors would watch over the preservation of their health and enforce the necessity for their education. The first Factory Act did not come into operation till January, 1834. It may well be imagined, therefore, that in the mills I looked upon male and female children, from seven years of age till seventeen (the employment of children under nine years was not then prohibited), who, scarcely coming under the cognizance of the masters,—for such children were subject to the control of the spinners,—were growing up in bodily weakness, in ignorance, and in vice. There was then little of kindly intercourse between the employers and the employed. The means of mental improvement for adults were very limited. A Mechanics' Institute and a Mechanics' and Apprentices' Library were indeed established in 1826. The "Athenæum" was built several years later. It was remarked in 1842, that there was no public park or green in which the labouring population could enjoy healthy exercise and

recreation. "The Peel Park," the first of those free pleasure-grounds which have removed this disgrace from Manchester, was not opened till 1846. So rare was any endeavour to advance the condition of the workers, to promote their innocent enjoyments, to cherish and instruct their children in the spirit of a common humanity, that when two letters to Mr. Horner, printed in a periodical work of 1840, recorded what had been done in a new mill in 1832, erected near Manchester by Messrs. Greg, there was a good deal of incredulity as to the probable results of such a deviation from the usual course of neglect. These gentlemen had built cottages for the operatives; they had attached a garden to each house; they had established Sunday-schools; they had arranged out-door exercises for the hours of leisure; they had provided hot and cold baths; they had evening parties, to which the young people were invited by their employers. This solitary example soon had its imitators. A factory, whether for cotton, linen, or woollen fabrics, is not now a region especially suited for the cultivation of all the suspicions and hatreds that in former times made the relations between the capitalist and the labourer the most dangerous aspect of our social state. In November, 1834, Mr. Rickards, the factory inspector of the Yorkshire and Lancashire district, thus described its people:—"In regarding the population of what is commonly called the principal manufacturing district, we are forcibly struck with its vast importance in a national point of view; its condensation within limited spots; its consequent means of free inter-communication; the intelligence, energy, and activity of many of its members, with the coarse low habits

of the general mass; from the want of sound, moral, and religious education, the slaves of vice, prejudice, and passion; easily excited by factious clamour as to real or supposed grievances, and formidable in all such cases from their numerical and united strength; the bond of union between masters and servants feebly knit, and resembling more the animosity of adverse interests than the salutary influence of the one class, with satisfied subordination on the part of the other." Had this condition of society continued in Lancashire till the cotton famine came to test the morality and intelligence of its half million of factory workers, and the Christian tempers of their employers, we may ask where we should have been in 1864?

In the factories of Manchester I had entered upon a new stage of self-education. I had previously seen nothing of machinery, beyond the Printing machine, whose gradual improvement and capabilities I had been watching with more than common interest. My curiosity was roused to follow and understand, as far as I could, the great principles of the wondrous inventions by which all the processes connected with the spinning and weaving cotton were rapidly and cheaply accomplished. They dwelt in my mind, and gave precision to my language when I wrote "The Results of Machinery" in December, 1830. When I described the invention of Arkwright as "the substitution of rollers for fingers," I had seen the marvellous operation in a state of improvement to which every day added something new, but in which the principle was ever retained. When I asked in that book, how many, even of the best informed, knew that in the cotton manufacture invention has been at work "to make machines, that make machines, to

make the cotton thereon," I had seen the "reed-making machine," and the "card-making machine," and I was enabled minutely to describe their automatic operations. I left Manchester with a grateful feeling that I had there learnt much which I should not readily forget. The power-loom was of comparatively recent introduction when I first visited Manchester; but my conviction of the impossibility of the hand-loom weavers maintaining an unequal competition, taught me to know that the time must come when the painful strife would be ended, and the manual workers with the rude implements of past ages would be the skilled watchers of the steam-impelled shuttle. This absorption of the one class into the other was taking place, even in the year 1828.

In my various conversations with the intelligent manufacturers of Manchester, and through the evidence of my own senses, I learnt to estimate the benefits of that relaxation of the system of Protection for native industry which was just beginning to operate. Huskisson's measure for removing prohibitory duties upon foreign silks had been in force two years. The echo was still heard throughout the country of the prophecy of ruin and starvation to fall upon hundreds and thousands "for the support of an abstract theory." In Manchester, silk mills were springing up, that would furnish new and profitable employment to hundreds and thousands. At the close of the Session of 1828—about six weeks after I had looked upon the manifestation of what a free-trade policy might accomplish—Mr. Charles Grant had said in the House of Commons—"It has been admitted on all hands that if the old machinery were

adhered to, it would be impossible to compete with foreign rivals. Very recently only the spirit of enterprise and improvement that marks our other manufactures has exercised its influence upon that of silk. New establishments have started up in different parts of the kingdom; at Cardiff and at Macclesfield—while at Manchester they have risen like exhalations." At Manchester, also, I learnt to estimate the enormous mischief of Excise duties in their retardation, if not destruction, of profitable industry. I visited some of the dye-works and print-works. There were ingenious processes to be seen—the beginnings of the triumphs of chemical science; artists were engraving blocks and cylinders; but there was an incubus upon the manufacture pressing upon its vitality, in the shape of threepence halfpenny a square yard levied upon all printed calicoes of whatever quality. It was a tax bearing as hardly upon the servant-maid's coarse-patterned cotton gown as upon her lady's flowery muslin. The exciseman was in the print-works at all hours. The important secrets of the trade could not be concealed from him. The operation of printing could not be commenced till the officer had measured the white cloth; and not a piece of printed goods could be sent away till the officer had stamped it. Of the impost which produced 2,000,000*l.*, only 600,000*l.* found its way to the Exchequer. This oppressive tax was one of the first to be swept away by a more enlightened fiscal policy. It was wholly abolished in 1831. The excise regulations were the great bar to experiment and improvement. In twenty years after the removal of the duty, such was the progress of mechanical invention and the application of science, that upon the same premises, with

the same amount of labour and with the same expenditure of capital, double the quantity of cloths were printed which were printed previous to the removal of the duty. I had learnt at Manchester a lesson as to the effects of excessive taxation and vexatious supervision which I might some day apply to the paper manufacture.

At Manchester, in 1828, I witnessed the first development of that public spirit which, in its gradual expansion, produced the "Exhibition of Art Treasures" in 1857. "The Manchester Institution" was in course of erection. Those who professed to believe that the absorbing pursuits of manufacturing capitalists would shut out the enjoyments of Taste, would have received a lesson from the words of Mr. Heywood (the Treasurer of our Local Association) in presenting 500*l.* to the Institution, for the purpose of bestowing an annual reward for the most meritorious production of its students. "Allow me to hope that many who, like myself, can look back with gratitude and respect to a long connection with the town of Manchester, will, by promoting the interests of this Institution, endeavour to obtain for the town a character as enduring as that which, surviving the loss of wealth and commerce, still renders illustrious those communities where the refinements of Art were once united to the enterprises of Trade."

I next visited Leeds. This busy town had then acquired the reputation, which it has not altogether lost, of being the most disagreeable place in England. Until I had crossed the bridge over the Aire, and, upon the top of the coach, had got into the broad and open Briggate, I thought that for crookedness, narrowness, and dirt its streets could compete with any town in

England. I perhaps felt this the more from the pleasurable scene I had experienced when I had escaped from the smoke of Manchester, to enjoy the hills beyond Oldham. How much more should I have felt it had I travelled through those exquisite valleys which the railway tourist sees too rapidly on his way from the metropolis of cotton to the metropolis of woollen. My business, however, in Leeds was to see men. I made the acquaintance of one whose statue has been placed in their noble Town-hall by his grateful townsmen,—Edward Baines, the founder of "The Leeds Mercury." I need not say that he warmly seconded my exertions; for a more liberal and more earnest man did not live, to carry on the course of political and social improvement which was then beginning. I visited the great flax factories of the Marshalls and the Gotts. I saw the Cloth-hall. I learnt something of the domestic manufacture of the West Riding. I saw cloth factories, and was thus enabled to describe,—not the machinery by which wool is converted into cloth with the greatest saving of time and material,—but the great division of employment in the process of manufacturing wool into cloth. I briefly described, in "The Rights of Industry," published in November, 1831, all the various stages of labour and skill which I had witnessed. "Between the growth of the fleece of wool and the completion of a coat by a skilful tailor—who, it is affirmed, puts five-and-twenty thousand stitches into it,—what an infinite division of employment! what inventions of science! what exercises of ingenuity! what unwearied application! what painful, and too often unhealthy labour! And yet, if men are to be clothed well and cheaply, all these manifold processes

are not in vain; and the individual injury in some branches of the employ is not to be compared with the suffering that would ensue if cloth were not made at all, or if it were made at such a cost that the most wealthy only could afford to wear it." But in my visit to the principal seat of the woollen manufacture, I could observe how legislation was still at work to neutralize the efforts of science and ingenuity for enabling others besides the rich to wear a good coat. For the protection of Agriculture, the Importation of sheep's wool was subjected to Customs duties, sometimes high, sometimes moderate, but always oppressive, as much by their uncertainty as by their positive weight. These were not abolished until 1842. For the protection of Manufactures, the Exportation of British wool had been prohibited since 1660; and the absolute prohibition existed until 1825. When the prohibition against the export of wool was removed, the manufacturers of the West Riding saw what French ingenuity could do with the long-treasured combing wool of England. They did not sit down in despair; but very soon produced stuffs that might compete with the most beautiful of the French. When I was at Leeds in 1828, this emulation was doing for the woollen manufacture what it was doing for the silk. Then, the wool of Australia was almost unknown. No one could have dreamt that from a Colonial empire, which few knew otherwise than as the Botany Bay of Convicts, would come a supply of wool, not only vast in quantity but of so silky a quality as to change the whole character of the finer fabrics. When South America had sent us the wool of the Alpaca, manufactories sprang up at Bradford upon a grander scale than even modern Leeds could

rival in its gigantic flax-mills. No one could have believed, in 1828, that woollen rags, then chiefly thrown upon the dunghill to rot for manure, could, by a judicious combination with wool, be made to produce useful articles of clothing which, if wool alone were used, would be beyond the means of the great mass of the working community. "Shoddy," the commercial name for woollen rags, has given to millions warm and cheap winter garments and light and pleasant summer ones. If legislators, in the desire to imitate the benevolence of their predecessors in preserving "the staple" of manufactures, should prohibit the use of "shoddy," we are told that one-third of the woollen mills in the kingdom would be closed, and distress brought upon the West Riding of Yorkshire as great as that produced in Lancashire from the want of cotton.*

* See Mr. Godwin's Jury Report on Class XXI. of International Exhibition, 1862.

CHAPTER V.

AT York, I accomplished very little of the work upon which I was intent. The commercial atmosphere was better adapted for the diffusion of secular knowledge than the ecclesiastical. I had received a hint from head-quarters to be cautious in my movements—"to be careful not to frighten people by the appearance of great ramifications of the Society, and so fill their heads with horrors of Corresponding Societies, Carbonari, Tugendbund, Jesuits, and other frightful images." So I had two days of rest and enjoyment. I saw the glorious Minster only a year before the middle aisle of the choir was destroyed by fire. I heard the grand old organ, which was destroyed in the same conflagration of 1829. I could climb upon the city walls, but I could not walk far upon them, for they were then in a ruinous state. I had a most interesting visit to "the Retreat"—that one Lunatic Asylum in the whole kingdom where the most grievous of maladies was not rendered hopeless of cure by stripes and the dark cell. The Society of Friends, in this their noble experiment, gave an impulse to the labours of such true philanthropists as Dr. Conolly, the kind and enlightened physician who was working as one of our Committee in 1828. The Retreat at York was visited by me at the period when Parliament was discussing the details of a Bill

for the Care and Treatment of Insane Persons, which became law in that Session.

I proceed on my journey, turning my face southward, and halt a little at Sheffield. My principal letter of introduction is to Mr. J. H. Abraham. This gentleman, seven years before my visit to him, had sent to the Society of Arts a model of a mouth-guard, to be used by dry-grinders and needle-pointers. The dry-grinders of Sheffield were constantly under the view of Mr. Abraham. He saw hundreds suffering from the "grinders' asthma," which invariably attacked those who had been regularly employed at this work when they had reached their twenty-fifth or twenty-seventh year, and entailed upon them a miserable existence for a very few years longer. The most ample testimony was given that the invention was completely successful. The mouth-piece effectively arrested the particles that, without it, produced this constant suffering and premature decay. Mr. Abraham sought no reward for his ingenuity but the pleasure of doing good. One and all, dry-grinders and needle-pointers, refused to adopt the invention. They believed that their high wages would be lowered, if the work were rendered less injurious. I saw the kind-hearted inventor, depressed by the disappointment of his desire to benefit his fellow-creatures. He probably took a gloomy view of the possibility of lifting his humbler townsmen out of the depths of their ignorance. He formed even a less sanguine estimate of the zeal of the more influential in attempts to dispel this darkness, when he said to me, "I fear this is a hopeless task in which you are engaged. You will have all sorts of prejudices to overcome. There is a general appre-

hension here of the education of the people. You will form no Committee here, but you may have my name to do what you please with. There is a general feeling that you have dark objects in view—that a desire to overthrow Church and State is at the bottom." I went my way; though I could scarcely believe that there would be a want of enlightenment amongst the wealthier classes in the town of James Montgomery, Samuel Bailey, and Ebenezer Elliott. Nor could I indulge such a dreary belief of the dogged ignorance of Sheffield workmen as this rejection of the means of health and life by the dry-grinders suggested, when I recollected that not a year had passed since I had learnt much in the society of a self-taught engineer, who was once a humble workman in Sheffield. In the Inaugural Lecture of the Sheffield Athenæum, which I delivered in 1847, I thus described this valued friend, who died in 1827: "For a few years I enjoyed the conversation of a very extraordinary man—rich in all scientific knowledge—inquiring in all subjects of mental philosophy—honoured, not by high titles but by universal respect—who once worked at the forge in this very town. That man—always full of the most ingenious mechanical contrivances, which he more particularly applied, in connection with his higher science, to the great objects of warming and ventilating our dwellings and our public buildings—invented, when he was a workman here, little machines to facilitate his handicraft labour, that he might have a greater share of leisure—not a higher amount of wages, but time to spare—for the purpose of a more intense devotion to the studies which eventually made him what he was. That

man was one of your Hallamshire worthies—Charles Sylvester." And yet, at that period, Mr. Abraham did not exaggerate the supineness of the payers of wages in the promotion of intelligence amongst the artisan class, nor the obstinacy of that class in refusing to accept the benefits which science offered them. Mr. M. D. Hill, in the September of 1828, visited Scotland for the purpose of seeing what progress was being made by our Society. From one of several interesting letters written by him during that journey I extract the following illustration of the difficulties of dealing with old habits and prejudices:—"In general, workmen are averse to all innovations, and their indisposition to change their plans thwarts an enterprising employer more than can be readily imagined. I myself had a relation who was a West Indian planter, and who tried to ease the labour of his negroes by changing the baskets with which they removed soil (carrying them on their heads) for wheelbarrows. The poor wretches clamoured for their baskets, and when they found they must use the wheelbarrows, they absolutely refused to wheel them along, but carried them on their heads. It is a great thing to change this negative quantity of intellect for the positive power of originating improvements. And yet such is the infatuation of some masters, that the wish to educate the lower orders is by no means universal among the employers of labour—not even among those who have themselves risen from the ranks."

I had delivered my credentials at Derby; had enjoyed the hospitality of the two eminent brothers, William and Joseph Strutt, and had arranged with them for a further consultation. I wanted a little

relief from my engrossing occupation, and I started to spend a couple of days at Matlock and Dovedale. I had the company at Matlock of John Sylvester, the son of the remarkable self-taught engineer, who began life as a common smith, and so improved his few hours of leisure as to become a writer of some of the best scientific articles in "Rees's Cyclopedia." I enjoyed for some years the friendship of the younger man, who succeeded his father in his professional pursuits, and obtained as high a reputation. The scenery of Matlock has been so often described, and has now become so well known by the agency of Railways, that I need not here linger. Parting with my companion, I hired a light carriage, and drove through a somewhat wild country to Dovedale. I well remember how astonished I was to witness a funeral procession amongst those hills—a long file of mourners on horseback, men and women, following a corpse to its last resting-place. On a bright evening of June I reached the prettiest of inns—the "Isaak Walton"—built by Mr. Watts Russell, the proprietor of the domain ,of Dovedale and the adjoining mansion of Ilam. The left bank of the Dove was free to all such wanderers as myself; for there the privileges of ownership did not extend. The gates on the right bank were locked. It mattered little to me that I could not pursue my walk in that solitary place, wandering as the river wandered "at its own sweet will." But I was indignant at the painted boards, meeting the eye at every turn, setting forth the legal punishment that awaited the trespasser. A month afterwards, my feelings welled out in a remonstrance against the purchased privileges of the rich man who had thus destroyed some of the poetry

of this exquisite scenery:—"Why have you profaned by your hateful proclamations this vale of peace, where nature has heaped up the rocks and crags in the most solemn forms, as if to call the heart to worship 'in a temple not made by hands'?—why have you profaned this glorious retreat, shut out as it were from a world over which man has the petty mastery, to lift up the soul to the Eternal Spirit of all created things, by exhibiting the impress of his power in the unchangeable masses of gigantic stones, that have stood upon this river's brink since the hills were torn asunder by some terrific convulsion, and the sparkling stream first rushed through the mighty chasm;—why have you profaned this monument of the grand workings of the God of Nature, and deformed a scene amidst which man ought only to move with reverence and peacefulness? Why this unnecessary parade of the rights of property? Take down your boards; place them in the gardens and shrubberies of Ilam as thick as you please, but allow us to look up the long vista of rocks and woods, and abandon our hearts to the tranquillising influence of this most perfect solitude, without having a thought of the gamekeeper and the attorney; let us hear the chorus of a thousand thrushes, pouring out the full note of harmony from the overflowings of their happiness, without recollecting that the world is full of beings in whom the spirit of enjoyment is dead, and who burrow their way amongst their riches, while the sun shines, and the breeze blows, in vain for them;—let us believe, while the wild rose sends forth its most honied perfume through every nook of this wild and solemn valley, that the whole earth is not yet under the dominion of a false refinement,

and that we may flee to the mountains, and to the secluded rivers, with the intention to commune with our own hearts, and to be still, without the voice of the proud one scaring us from our vision of peace."* As I strolled the next day through the village of Mapleton, I thought of the two poetical anglers who had walked here in loving companionship. In that ancient inn surely Cotton and Walton had cooked a trout. Did Cotton write those lines upon the sign of "The Gate" which proclaim the ancient alehouse as one that had afforded entertainment to others than Derbyshire hinds?—

> "This Gate hangs well,
> And hinders none;
> Refresh thyself,
> And travel on."

I take the advice, and am again in Derby.

The business of my mission had gone on smoothly during my brief absence. But the converts had been chiefly Unitarian Dissenters, of which body the Strutts were the acknowledged heads in Derby. I came back to their town at an exciting time. There was to be a public dinner to celebrate the Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts. Lord John Russell's first great labour in the cause of religious liberty had become law on the 9th of May. Lord John Russell was the Vice-Chairman of our Useful Knowledge Society, and his name was, therefore, a ready passport for me to a cordial welcome, when I attended as a guest at the public dinner. It was a curious spectacle. Many of those present were Dissenting min-

* "London Magazine," August, 1828.

isters. Some had come from remote villages nestled in the hills—"mountains," as Cotton calls them. In their after-dinner oratory there was a rude strength, which indicated not only their zeal, but their inexperience. I see now the lank form, the haggard face, of one young man, who raved as if the days of martyrdom had only passed away during the previous fortnight, when "the necessity of receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper as a qualification for certain offices and employments" had ceased. The youthful enthusiast who lives in my memory moved his audience, as the "Macbriar" of Scott moved the Solemn League and Covenant men in the days of real persecution. "The fun"—dare I call it fun?—"grew fast and furious." I sat by the side of the Chairman, Mr. Higginson, the very clever minister of Derby. He whispered to me that we had better make a move to go. "Some of these worthy men," he said, "are not used to public dinners; I must keep them steady." So he announced that Mr. William Strutt would be glad to see all the company to tea at his house. It was a real relief to have a quiet talk in his library with this sagacious and tolerant man—a great reader, a vigorous thinker, an encourager of all scientific talent, as his brother was a lover, and in some respects a patron of Art. A stroll in the beautiful gardens restored the orators of the Repeal dinner to their ordinary habit of discoursing upon matters sacred and secular. There was no "Arboretum" then to tempt us to wander on that summer evening in less secluded gardens. That noble addition to the attractions of Derby was the present of Joseph Strutt to his townsfolk. What a contrast to the spirit which partially shut up Dove-

dale, are the words of this descendant of Jedediah Strutt,—the partner with Arkwright in the "Derby-rib" stocking manufacture,—spoken in 1840 at the opening of the grounds which he had dedicated to public use. He might have said,—

> "I give them you,
> And to your heirs for ever; common pleasures,
> To walk abroad, and recreate yourselves."

But poetry was unnecessary to enhance the value of the gift; and so he took occasion to utter words of wisdom which have not been without their use, in producing that better spirit in which the wealthy and the great have cast off the exclusiveness of a past generation:—"It has often been made a reproach to our country that, in England, collections of works of art, and exhibitions for instruction and amusement, cannot, without danger of injury, be thrown open to the public. If any ground for such a reproach still remains, I am convinced that it can be removed only by greater liberality in admitting the people to such establishments; by thus teaching them that they are themselves the parties most deeply interested in their preservation, and that it must be the interest of the public to protect that which is intended for the public advantage. If we wish to obtain the affections of others, we must manifest kindness and regard towards them; if we seek to wean them from debasing pursuits and brutalizing pleasures, we can only hope to do so by opening to them new sources of rational enjoyment."

Nottingham had for me some matters of more immediate interest than the gratification of antiquarian

curiosity. I looked, of course, rapidly at the spot where Charles first opened

"The purple testament of bleeding war;"

which Colonel Hutchinson had defended, his heroic wife ever at his side. The modern Castle was in 1828 a fit residence for a great noble. In 1830 it was a blackened ruin,—a monument of blind fury and popular ignorance at a season of political excitement. I wanted to learn something of the existing condition of the working population. Luddism had been quelled. There was no longer the terror of armed bands breaking into factories and destroying the lace-machines, which were, perhaps, the most beautiful of inventions for superseding manual labour. The patent of 1809, which could never be worked profitably by the inventor in the face of the combinations of workmen and the jealousy of manufacturers, expired in 1823; and then capitalists and mechanics became wild with the desire to possess some interest in the wondrous money-making power which appeared to belong to the bobbin-net machines. Artisans assisted as co-operators in the working of a lace-frame. Shareholders of all trades and professions became speculators in the lace-manufacture. The competition for the possession of a machine was so great that any price under a thousand pounds was considered moderate. The mania was subsiding when I was at Nottingham. I saw this wondrous machine in an imperfect state compared with its present capabilities; and I could easily understand how the poor lace-makers of Buckinghamshire, whose moving bobbins I had often noticed with admiration,

would be driven out by a machine which, worked by one person, could produce many thousand meshes in a minute. But it would then have been difficult to believe, as we learn upon the authority of Mr. William Felkin,—a Nottingham manufacturer, whose intelligence is as remarkable as his energetic benevolence, —that the annual returns of the machine-made lace-trade would have reached five millions sterling in 1862. The active philanthropy of this gentleman has been chiefly displayed in his labours to alleviate the condition of the stockingers of the hosiery district; and it is consolatory to learn, that "the worn and anxious countenances, by which these men during the first half of the century were easily distinguishable, are only seen among the relics of the past generation of stocking-makers." * The entire system of remuneration for labour, under which these stockingers lived, was a complicated system of slavery. They worked in their own miserable homes at a stocking-frame, for which they paid rent weekly. That rent was a fixed charge, levied by the manufacturer who gave out the yarn to the weaver. There were speculators in frames, who let them out also—"independent" frames, as they were called. If the hosiery trade were slack, those who hired the frames upon which the manufacturer obtained a profit from the rent could obtain no work. Still less could they obtain employ if, rare occurrence, they possessed frames of their own, like the hand-loom weavers of Yorkshire. In addition to all this there was the ever present tyranny and extortion of a "middle-man." No wonder that there were "worn and

* Jurors' Reports of International Exhibition, 1862.

anxious countenances" at Nottingham when I visited that fine town. No wonder that I made little progress in my task of interesting masters and workmen in the Diffusion of Knowledge.

I was invited to Birmingham by a gentleman, whose friendship I am happy to have retained. Mr. Joseph Parkes had been apprised by Mr. Brougham that I was about to visit his town. He had rendered valuable assistance to the Law Reformer in the preparation of his speech of the 7th February, and his name was several times quoted in that speech. Mr. Parkes had written to me, "I shall be most glad to see you at my house for bed, board, and entertainment. I will also give you a private sitting-room in which to concert matters, and introduce you to those disciples most likely to aid us here." I could not refuse such an invitation. Yet I had a most respected friend in Thomas Wright Hill, the father of my friend Matthew Davenport; the founder of that remarkable innovation upon the old routine of Middle-class Schools, which was called "The Hazelwood System." That school near Birmingham was still conducted by the elder Hill, although his distinguished son, Rowland, with his brothers Edwin and Arthur, had established a school upon the same system at Bruce Castle, Tottenham. I had seen the workings of that system once before at Hazelwood, after I had published, in 1824, the volume on "Public Education," which was attributed to the elder brother, who was then practising at the bar with great success. Mr. Parkes's hospitable offer placed me more in the heart of the business which I had to conduct. I need not say that my sojourn with him was agreeable; for to his own qualities of

improving companionship were added those of his amiable wife, a grand-daughter of Dr. Priestley. Mr. Parkes was at that time, as he long continued to be, an ardent politician. The Liberals of Birmingham were smarting under the issue of the East Retford Disfranchisement Bill of the 21st April, in which it was proposed that the franchise should be transferred to Birmingham, or some other large town. Sir James Macintosh, on that debate, had said, "I have nothing to do with the question as it respects Birmingham, except (comparing it with the section of a county to which it is proposed to transfer the franchise) to ask, whether the inhabitants of Birmingham, an unrepresented community, a population of one hundred and twenty thousand, abounding with men of property, character, and intelligence; or the comparatively small number of fifteen hundred freeholders of Nottinghamshire,—all of whom already possess the right of voting for Members of Parliament, should be selected as the successor of the delinquent Corporation of Retford." The sting of the great political mistake of the Tories remained, and Birmingham had become radical to an extent which two years later had grown alarming. I had nothing to do with political animosities; but it was an unpropitious time for preaching the Diffusion of Knowledge without regard to political objects. An influential Local Association was, however, formed, which rendered good service to our objects.

As a matter of course, I saw some of the manufacturing processes of Birmingham—its Pins, its Buttons, and its Muskets. This experience was of use to me when I had to write "The Results of Machinery." Some of the recent marvels of

Birmingham had not then been called into existence by the discoveries of Science. There was no manufacture of Electro-plate. The progress of education had not abolished the Quill-pen, and produced the extensive organization of the manufacture of the Steel-pen. The Birmingham School of Arts had taken the initiative of Art cultivation, with reference to works of Industry, long before the Government Schools of Design were established. It was founded in 1821. There was a Mechanics' Institute, not very flourishing. The chief public buildings were erected after my visit—the Town-Hall, and the King Edward's Grammar School. I spent nearly a week with my hospitable friends, and had seen many things in Birmingham that were more worth seeing than what Burke saw when he called the busy town of his time, "The Toy-shop of Europe."

I returned to London with some valuable additions to my store of knowledge, and considerable enlargement of mind from my whole tour. As a partial acquaintance with London had removed many of the prejudices of my early provincial life, so a contemplation of other great towns had taught me that the energy, the intelligence, the wealth of England were not exclusively to be sought in the capital. Of the commercial aspects of London I had really seen very little. Her docks, her manufactories, were for the most part unknown to me. Of its vast extent I could only form a vague notion. In that summer the stranger in the metropolis, as well as its constant inhabitants, might acquire some precise ideas of the great arteries and minute veins, the streets and alleys, through which the vast flood of human life was daily circulating. The Colosseum in the Regent's

Park was opened to private visitors, although its Panorama of London was not quite complete. The Ball and Cross of St. Paul's having been under repair in the previous year, Mr. Horner, a meritorious artist, had undertaken to make a series of panoramic sketches from that giddy height. He invariably commenced his labours immediately after sunrise, before the lighting of the innumerable fires, which pour out their dark and sullen clouds during the day, and spread a mantle over this wide congregation of the dwellings of men, which only midnight can remove. Did the winds pipe ever so loud, and rock him to and fro in his wicker-basket, there he sat in lordly security, intently delineating, what few have seen—the whole of the splendid city—its palaces and its hovels, its churches and its prisons—from one extremity to the other, spread like a map at his feet. Gradually the signs of life would be audible and visible from his solitary elevation. The one faint cry of the busy chapman swelling into a chorus of ardent competitors for public patronage—the distant roll of the solitary wain, echoed, minute after minute, by the accumulation of the same sound, till all individual noise was lost in the general din—the first distant smoke rising like a spiral column into the skies, till column after column sent up their tribute to the approaching gloom, and the one dense cloud of London was at last formed, and the labours of the painter were at an end ;—these were the daily objects of him who, before the rook went forth for his morning flight, was gazing upon the most extensive and certainly the most wonderful city of the world, from the highest pinnacle of a temple which has only one rival for majesty and beauty. The situation

was altogether a solemn and an inspiriting one;—and might well suggest and prolong that enthusiasm which was necessary to the due performance of the extraordinary task which the painter had undertaken.

Upon the outer circle of the Colosseum was spread Mr. Horner's panoramic view. I stand on an elevation which corresponds in size and situation with the external gallery which is round the top of the dome of St. Paul's. I am looking down Ludgate Hill. How the streets are filled with the toil and turmoil of commerce! Turn to the right, the struggle is there going forward; turn to the left, it is there also. I look from the west to the east, and let the eye range along the dark and narrow streets that crowd the large space from Cheapside to the Thames—all are labouring to fill their warehouses with the choicest products of the earth, or to send our fabrics to the most distant abode of civilized or uncivilized man. I look beyond, at the river crowded with vessels—the docks, where the masts show like a forest: and when I have called to mind the riches which are here congregated—the incessant toil for the support of individual respectability and luxury—the struggles with false pride—the desperate energy of commercial adventure—the spirit of gambling which brings down the proud to sudden poverty, and raises the obscure to more dangerous riches—and above all, amidst this accumulation of wealth, when I consider how many are naked, and starving, and utterly forsaken of men, I may, perchance think that better social arrangements might exist, which would leave mankind more free to cultivate the higher attributes of their nature than the desire of gain; and, without destroying the ordinary excite-

ments to emulation, relieve society of some of its frightful inequalities.

At this period I was intimate with Robert Owen. I could not exactly assent to his opinion that in a year or two grass would be growing in Fleet Street and Cheapside, and the happier human race would be living in parallelograms upon co-operative principles. I look back now upon this benevolent visionary with deep respect, for he was no pretender to the character of Reformer. He was altogether an unselfish man. He had no mercenary views. He spent a large fortune upon his schemes. He made a great mistake at his outset in thinking that his principles of mundane happiness could not be accomplished except by the destruction of religious belief. But how successfully have many practical plans of Co-operation, for Consumption and for Production, been accomplished in later days! How many noble aspirations have been promulgated under the influence of what is called Christian Socialism!

During my absence from home my co-editor, Barry St. Leger, had exclusively attended to the conduct of the "London Magazine." Our undertaking promised no great pecuniary advantage; for several years of bad management had reduced that Miscellany to a much lower level than that of the brilliant days of Charles Lamb, and Hazlitt, and Hood, and De Quincey. But it furnished us very agreeable employment from the spring of 1828 till the summer of 1829. My occupations, in connexion with the Useful Knowledge Society, had then become too engrossing and too important to allow of a continuance on my part of those pleasant excursions into the field of light periodical literature. What was a

more serious impediment, the health of my friend and associate had begun to fail. When I first became acquainted with St. Leger in May, 1824, I published for him one of the most charming volumes of fiction that had its little hour of fame, and was then forgotten. If any of my readers should find on a book-stall "Some accounts of the Life of the late Gilbert Earle, Esq., written by himself," let him cheerfully bestow a shilling upon the purchase, and read it as a relief from the extravagant incidents and flashy style of many of the later race of novelists. The book was ready for publication, waiting only for the Preface. A physician came to me to say that Mr. St. Leger was seriously ill; that mental exertion was impossible; and that he had intimated a wish that I would write the Preface. I did so—not in my own name, but in that of the imaginary editor of this Fragment of Autobiography. My friend was sent out of town, and recovered after an absence of some months. But the malady was only arrested for a time.

I scarcely know how to speak in terms that should not be considered extravagant of my affectionate regard for this interesting young man. I have already alluded to our intercourse at the time of the "Quarterly Magazine" (Vol. I., p. 329). The "London Magazine" united us still more firmly in the closest friendship. Of a good family and of high connexions, he moved, when it so pleased him, in fashionable society; but his enjoyments were in the companionship of a few lawyers and men of letters in his Chambers. He was amongst the most welcome of "the old familiar faces" who would come unceremoniously to dine or to drink tea with my family. He

was fond of children; and my little girls clung around him to hear his merry anecdotes of Irish humour, or his touching stories of English poverty, or his picturesque relation of strange scenes that he had witnessed in India. For in India he had filled a high civil office at a very early age. About this part of his life there is some mystery; and there are passages in "Gilbert Earle" which are evidently not absolute fiction. In the latter part of 1829, the disease of the brain, which had incapacitated him for hard continuous work in letters or in law, returned. After a little while his case appeared hopeless. I have before me a letter of De Quincey's, dated February 19, 1830, in which he says, "Pray tell me something more circumstantial about poor St. Leger. As a man of talents, and a man of most amiable disposition, I always recollect him with great interest; and from your last letter I collected that some deplorable calamity had befallen him, of the nature of apoplexy or paralysis—but not exactly which, or when, or under what prospect of restoration." Before this letter arrived I had followed him to his grave. He was to have been the godfather of my only son.

St. Leger left unfinished "Selections from the Old Chroniclers," which posthumous work was published by Mr. Colburn. There are historical dissertations prefixed to some of the extracts, which are really valuable, exhibiting qualities which would have carried him onward to a richer field of literature than he had previously attempted to cultivate.

In the summer of 1828, so far were the Londoners from the belief that grass would be growing in their streets, that they were occupied with many schemes for easier and quicker communication between their

great city and its suburbs. The experiments which had been making for the improvement of the locomotive steam-engine upon railways—which Telford described before a Committee of the House of Commons as indicating the possibility of accomplishing fifteen or even twenty miles an hour—had set invention to work to produce a steam-carriage for common roads. I went to see such a machine at the manufactory of Messrs. Bramah. This notion was ridiculed at a somewhat earlier epoch, when the visions of science were the favourite objects of literary satire. A very clever novel of this character was read by me in my boyish hours. It was called Flim Flams, and was attributed to the elder D'Israeli. From a manuscript letter of Miss Cartwright, the daughter of the famous inventor of the Power Loom, I transcribe the following anecdote: "There is in D'Israeli's Flim Flams, a curious and laughable description of an inventor coming down to see the hero of the book, in a carriage worked by steam, and arriving in such a state of perspiration, that he is represented as smoking like a boiled potato. I remember that my father was exceedingly amused with this description, which he told me originated in a conversation he had with D'Israeli on the subject of steam-carriages, and which, at the time, the latter good-humouredly quizzed, and I think threatened to introduce him and his carriage into print."

CHAPTER VI.

ON my return to London at the end of June, 1828, the meetings of the Useful Knowledge Society were approaching their termination for the season. Parliament was prorogued. The members of our committee had mostly left town; lawyers were on circuit; members of Parliament were looking after their local interests. But I had to keep up a tolerably active correspondence with some who took an especial interest in the works upon which I was occupied—with none more unremittingly than Mr. Brougham. Whether contending in friendly rivalry for the leadership of the Northern Circuit with Mr. Pollock, or enjoying the delicious quiet of his family home in Westmoreland, his mind was ever occupied with thoughts of the society which he had founded, and which was daily growing more important. Mr. Hill writes to me from Ambleside on the 30th of August:—"I came here with Mr. Brougham, from Lancaster, to-day. Scenery glorious of course. But I fear we talked more about diffusion of knowledge than anything else. Mr. B. is delighted with all you have done." It was very pleasant to know that my preparations for the "Library of Entertaining Knowledge" were approved. I was chiefly engaged in writing "The Menageries," which was a sufficient task for my faculties; for I had to learn a good deal

of the subjects upon which I was to write. But Mr. Brougham, estimating the powers of other men by his own, would have had me engage in some by-work for both of the series—the Useful and the Entertaining. I had intimated a desire to write a Life of Alfred. With his characteristic readiness, while expressing his gratification, he suggests to me not to lose sight of one interesting part of the subject—"the ancient form of our government—there are many errors afloat in this matter." He then states that Mr. Allen, of Holland House, has, more than all lawyers and historians, studied it deeply, and he sends me a list of Mr. Allen's articles in the "Edinburgh Review," on topics connected with this question. I had also given to Mr. Brougham the introductory portion of a life of Las Casas—a subject which had deeply interested me, as a very young man, when I had read in Croft's singular volume, "Love and Madness," that, "all things considered, Bartholomew Las Casas was perhaps the greatest man that ever existed." Mr. Brougham writes—"I have lost sight of Las Casas. How near making a volume is it for the L. E. K.? If not for that, there must be at least enough for a treatise in the L. U. K." How could I let the grass grow under my feet with such an inciter to activity?

In looking back at some correspondence of September, 1828, I am enabled to form an accurate conception of the technical difficulties of producing a cheap book with excellent wood-cuts. I had arranged to have my "Menageries" illustrated with representations of animals drawn from the life. I was fortunate in securing the assistance of several rising young men, who did not disdain what some

painters might have deemed ignoble employment. Two of these are now Royal Academicians. There were not many wood-engravers then in London; and this art was almost invariably applied to the production of expensive books, printed in the finest style. The legitimate purpose of wood-engraving was not then attained. It is essentially that branch of the art of design which is associated with cheap and rapid printing. In the costly books of the period a single woodcut introduced into a sheet to be worked off with the types, enhanced the cost of manual labour in a proportion which would now seem incredible. In engraving the wood-cuts for the "Menageries," some attention of the artist was necessary to give his shadows the requisite force, and his lights the desired clearness, so as to meet the uniform application of the ink, and the cylindrical pressure, in the printing-machine process. It was long before this excellence could be practically attained. Without this explanation it would appear ludicrous that Mr. Hill should write to me from Mr. Brougham's house,—"Everybody here is in raptures with the proofs of the wood-cuts; but we have misgivings about the machine." A sheet of my book was to be set up with the engravings in their due place, and a hundred or two were to be printed off by the rapid operation. "Mr. Loch is here," writes Mr. Hill. "We have held a committee. He will be in London in a fortnight, quite at leisure, and anxious to attend to our affairs. He has promised to assist at Clowes's. I hope you will succeed in assembling everybody." "Everybody" not only meant the patentee of the machine, the wood-engraver, the stationer, the ink-maker, and

the ingenious overseer of the printing office, but as many of the committee as I could get together. Imagine a learned society thus employed! Imagine a hard-worked editor thus exhorted to interference with a printer's proper duty! Yet such was a part of my editorial duty at a time when the great revolution in the production of books to be accomplished by the printing machine, was almost as imperfectly realised as when Caxton first astonished England by the miracles of the printing press. We succeeded in partially overcoming the difficulties of making an illustrated volume not despicable as a work of art, and yet cheap—something very different from the lesson books with blotches called pictures, that puzzled the school-boy mind half a century ago, to distinguish what some daub was meant to delineate; "It is backed like a weasel's," says Brown—"or, like a whale," says Jones—"Very like a whale," concludes Robinson.

At this time my duties in connection with the "Library of Entertaining Knowledge" were simply those of author and editor. I had retained a proprietary interest in the Almanac and Companion, although it was published for two years by Messrs. Baldwin. But the new series was a large undertaking, from the risk of which I shrank. Again, Mr. Murray, as a publisher, was to have been associated with my labours. In November, 1828, Mr. Tooke, the treasurer of the society, informed me that Mr. Murray desired that I should send him "the form of a reduced advertisement, descriptive only of the intended volume." The "Menageries" was then sufficiently advanced for me to comply. Before the volume was ready for publication the

proprietor of the "Quarterly Review" took some alarm. The Society and he parted company, but upon very friendly terms. I was urged to take "at the flood" this opportunity of the "tide in the affairs of man." I found a capitalist ready to bear his part in my new venture. I made terms with the Society, which secured to them a rent upon the copies sold of the "Library of Entertaining Knowledge." I was again a publisher in Pall Mall East, before Midsummer, 1829, when the first volume of the "Menageries" was published. At the same period Mr. Murray issued the first volume of his "Family Library."

The sub-committees of the Society are once more in active work when the long vacation had come to an end. The monthly meetings now regularly take place. At these periodical gatherings there is a dinner at five o'clock—a plain English dinner, at a moderate fixed charge, to which each present contributes. There is a subscription for wine. On these occasions the organisation of the Society is fully developed. The sub-committees report their proceedings; the general committee confirm them. Questions are asked; suggestions are made. The chairman conducts the proceedings with the least possible parade of words. The members express their opinions in the same quiet conversational tone. I never heard but one oration in that assembly of which so many eloquent statesmen and lawyers formed a part. That display came from a president of the Royal Academy, whose rhetoric is as forgotten a thing as his "Rhymes on Art." Let me look back upon those pleasant meetings, at which I had generally the happiness to

be present during more than fifteen years. Let me, without confining myself to a particular session of my early years in connection with the Society, look round that social table, to call up the shadows of some whose reputations only survive, and to renew, as it were, the friendships which I have still the happiness of possessing.

The dinner is over in an hour. There has been pleasant gossip and occasional fun. A few cordial greetings have passed in the old form of the wine-pledge, which we of a past generation regret to find almost obsolete. The cloth is cleared. Mr. Coates, the secretary, moves to the side of the chairman, and there are then two hours of solid business. Subjects of science, of art, of literature, having to be discussed, the talk is sure to be improving, and occasionally amusing. The chair is generally filled by Mr. Brougham, and, in his rare absence, more frequently by the treasurer, Mr. William Tooke, than by Lord John Russell, the vice-chairman. Other members, however, are occasionally called to take the chair. Mr. Tooke was one of the founders of the Society, and was for some years an active member. He was somewhat ambitious of literary distinction, priding himself upon being one of "the family of Tooke," his father having been known as the author of some valuable works on Russia; his brother Thomas being the eminent political economist, the historian of "Prices." Our treasurer had somewhat harsh treatment from the critics as the biographer of Churchill. I always regarded him as a kind-hearted man of moderate abilities—somewhat fussy, not altogether disinclined to a job, and always disposed to be patronizing.

Where shall I begin with those who did not fill the offices of the Society amongst the sixty members of its committee? I cannot classify them according to their professional pursuits; for in this gathering, statesmen, lawyers, physicians, professors, not only clubbed their technical knowledge, but their various acquirements in science, in history, in art, in ancient scholarship, in modern literature. I must take the individuals somewhat at random, as they crowd upon my memory in connection with my own experience.

James Mill. I see the historian of British India, sitting near Mr. Brougham, listening to his opinions with marked attention. It always appeared to me a signal tribute to the intellectual eminence of the great orator, that the writer who, of all others, aimed most at terseness and perspicuity, should exhibit such deference to one whose reputation was built upon broader foundations than logical profundity or metaphysical subtlety. Yet so it was. Their minds were not certainly cast in the same mould; yet there must have been deep sympathies between them—as is perhaps often the case when two men of apparently opposite temperaments, and pursuing very different paths to eminence, are brought into friendly contact for a common object. Mr. Mill was too soon removed from us. To me he rendered valuable aid in the early numbers of the "Companion to the Almanac."

Henry Hallam was one of the original promoters of the Society, of which, during many years, he was an active member. That the historian of the "Middle Ages," was an authority in the committee cannot be doubted. He was a sedulous attendant

upon sub-committees. He read proofs diligently. In his general manner rather cold and dry, he would occasionally deliver an energetic opinion, pregnant with good sense and refined taste. I used at first to feel some shrinking from his critical faculty, but no one could be more tolerant or encouraging; and if he made objections it was generally without harshness. He was in the full possession of his high faculties when I first had the opportunity of benefiting, in a small degree, by the quiet exhibition of his varied acquirements. The great sorrow of his life had not then chilled his energy. He lived to recover, outwardly, the loss which gave occasion to the noblest elegiac poetry in our language.

I turn to a man eminent in a pursuit not less useful than that of the historian—to Francis Beaufort, the hydrographer to the Admiralty, under whose especial superintendence the Atlas of the Society attained a perfection never before realised in this country. His design of producing the most trustworthy maps at the cheapest rate, would have conferred an honourable distinction upon this Association, if it had accomplished nothing else. But Captain Beaufort (afterwards Admiral Sir Francis) did not confine himself to the duties of this great undertaking. I could always rely upon his sound judgment in discussing any project that I offered, or in the correction of proofs. No member of the committee wrote purer English. Of his unremitting kindness I had ample experience. The frankness, almost bluntness, of the sailor was never offensive, for it had the true ring of the sterling metal of an honest mind, and the unvarnished courtesy of a gentleman. Shall I place by the side of this worthy plain

dealer and plain speaker one of whom it has been said he often tried to make himself disagreeable, but never succeeded? There was no man with whom I less perfectly sympathized when I first joined the Society than Henry Bellenden Ker; gradually I learnt to understand him. I have the happiness still to enjoy an intimacy that has endured since those early days of our intercourse—proof against banter on one side, and pettishness on the other. He was the most fertile in projects of any member of the committee. Apart from the Society, he had ever some new scheme to suggest to me as a publishing enterprise. His plans were not always practicable; but they always indicated the fertility of his mind, and the refinement of his taste. He did me incalculable good in his rough-riding when I was learning my paces in this intellectual manége. It was like the discipline which a young barrister receives on his first circuit. Not to wince under a joke; to see the kind heart and the earnest good will, ill-concealed by the levity of tongue; to find indifference growing into cordiality, and then ripening into friendship—this was my experience of a man whose ready talent, whose social aptitude, rarely failed to secure the friendship of the young and of the aged—one who was a warm politician without the bitterness of a partisan; whose companionable qualities gave pleasure to the declining vigour of Lyndhurst, and who continues, as he had begun, to be the cherished friend of Brougham.

In the present instance, as in others that will constantly occur, I find it exceedingly difficult to speak with the same freedom of the living as of the dead. Yet, looking back for more than a generation upon

the eminent persons with whom I had become acquainted, they all assume with me an aspect approaching to the historical. I run over the list of the committee prefixed to the "British Almanac" for 1830. Of forty-five members, whose essential services in the diffusion of knowledge live in my remembrance, twenty-five are gone where "all hidden things shall be made manifest." Yet to speak impartially, I must not pass over those who remain with us, believing that the "*nil nisi verum*" is a better principle to act upon either for the living or the dead than the "*nil nisi bonum.*"

I have already, several times, mentioned Matthew Davenport Hill as a member of the committee; and it is therefore unnecessary that I should here dwell upon the energy of his character as a diffuser of knowledge. He was one of the earliest members of the Society. His brother Rowland was elected when it was fully in action. Of modest demeanour; courteous but independent; expressing his opinions with a prudent brevity,—few could have given him credit for that unwearied industry in following out all the ramifications of a complicated question; for that power of marshalling all the possible details of a great theory which in practice resolved itself into the most complete organisation. The inventor of the Penny Postage made no eager rush to the display of an imperfect project. He felt every step of his way, and when he had ceased to have any doubt of the certainty of his convictions, he put them forth with the confidence of genius, and was ready to do battle for them with the courage which is the best pledge of victory. The young schoolmaster of Hazelwood became one of the greatest of public benefactors.

Amongst the founders of the society, Dr. Roget was, from his accepted high reputation, the most eminent of its men of science. He wrote its treatises on Electricity and on Magnetism. He was a diligent attendant on its committees; a vigilant corrector of its proofs. Of most winning manners, he was as beloved as he was respected. I met him in 1863, at an evening party, and had much talk with him about our old intercourse. Full of animation,—with undimmed intelligence—his age was "as a lusty winter, frosty but kindly." In his beaming face there could scarcely be found the traces of that hard work—made up of professional practice, of scientific writing, of secretaryship of the Royal Society, of lecturer at the Royal Institution,—which he had gone through since he graduated in medicine at Edinburgh in 1798. Upon all questions of Physiology, Peter Mark Roget and Charles Bell are the great authorities in the Useful Knowledge Society. No higher service could have been rendered to the association in its early stages than Mr. Bell's contribution to its treatises. His "Animal Mechanics" is a model of popular writing upon subjects which demand high scientific knowledge. This charming production was published in 1828. At that time there was another member of the medical profession—one, however, unconnected with our Society—who also contributed most effectually to disperse the belief that science could only be taught in the use of technical language;—that the uninitiated in the technicalities had better not attempt to comprehend the mysteries of that temple where there was scant room for the worship of the multitude. Dr. Neil Arnott, in 1827, published the first portion of his

"Elements of Physics; or Natural Philosophy, General and Medical, explained in plain or non-technical language." Never was book more popular; never was the completion of any undertaking more anxiously looked for. The first volume of the "Sixth and Completed Edition" reaches me while I write this chapter. It is a presentation copy from one who for five-and-thirty years has won the love and gratitude of me and mine, as the wise physician and the hearty friend. I could not forego this digression from the matters more immediately before me.

The Useful Knowledge committees, as I have looked upon these monthly assemblages, present the aspect of something higher than toleration—a cordial union of men of very different persuasions in religion, who have met upon a common platform for the advancement of knowledge, to which religion can never be opposed. Let me group three representatives of opinions that appear as far removed as possible from amalgamation. Dr. Maltby, a great classical scholar, the preacher at Lincoln's Inn, the future bishop, first of Chichester, and then of Durham, is a dignified representative of the Church of England. He is zealous for the welfare of the Useful Knowledge Society, of which he was one of the earliest members. He will do its work assiduously and carefully. He will not insist upon religious topics being thrust in amongst secular. He will not stickle for the due honour of the Established Church. How can he do either? By his side, it may be, sits Mr. Isaac Lyon Goldsmid, the wealthy Jew, whose ambition, as that of the Rothschilds and of other men of large property and unimpeachable loyalty, is to have a voice in the British Parliament.

Mr. Goldsmid is a man of something more than business talent; good tempered; not obtruding the pride of riches; hospitable. Mr. William Allen, the Quaker, may form the third in this group. I have often called on him at his old place of business in Plough Court, where, a practical chemist, he had been a thriving tradesman, and at the same time a Fellow of the Royal Society and a valuable contributor to its transactions. He well merited the honour of his countrymen for other qualities than his scientific acquirements. He was a liberal promoter of every public scheme of benevolence. He established upon his estate at Lindfield, in Sussex, after he withdrew from the cares of a commercial life, schools for boys, girls, and infants,—real schools of industry, where agriculture was taught, as well as many useful arts. Whilst the children had every opportunity for acquiring health in recreation, and improvement in a good library, he built cottages for the labourers of his village, such as ought to have shamed many a landowner out of his neglect. The memory of this good man is to me fresh and fragrant.

There was perhaps no society in England, with the exception of the Royal Society, which could present such a knot of young men of high promise as were assembled at our committees in the earliest stages of their organisation. Mr. John William Lubbock, the only child of the eminent city banker, assiduously followed his father's calling, whilst he was attaining the highest reputation as a mathematician. In 1825 he had graduated as M.A. at Cambridge. In 1828 he was rendering me the most important assistance in the preparation of the "British Almanac." For several years he worked

with the heartiest zeal at this apparently humble contribution to the objects of the Society. But the occupation was not a humble one, for he was practically developing his investigations upon the Tides, which subject formed several papers in the Philosophical Transactions. Devoting himself with the same readiness to superintend the astronomical portion of the British Almanac, I was also brought into intercourse with Mr. John Wrottesley, afterwards Lord Wrottesley, and President of the Royal Society. He was a member of the bar. Mr. Benjamin Malkin—afterwards Sir Benjamin, when he accepted a high judicial appointment in India, and there too soon closed his valuable life—devoted his great talents and acquirements with indefatigable industry to the business of our committee. His forte was mathematics. His brother Arthur was elected to the committee a few years after, and in several departments rendered essential service as a writer and editor. Mr. T. F. Ellis, the friend and executor of Macaulay, had many opportunities, in the revision of the Society's works, to exercise his acute critical faculty. Mr. Lefevre (now Sir John) was also one of the distinguished Cambridge graduates who gave to the Useful Knowledge Society the prestige of their academical honours.

The University of London (as the College was then called) numbered amongst its Professors some of the ablest members of our committee. Amongst the first of those who joined the Society was Mr. George Long. In subsequent "Passages," I shall have so frequently to mention his name, as one of the most important of my associates, that it will be scarcely necessary for me here to do more than allude to his unequalled

industry, his rich scholarship, his sound judgment, which very soon gave him his right position amongst the eminent persons by whom he was surrounded. Mr. De Morgan became a member somewhat later. I first saw him in 1830. The occasion will arise for mentioning the eminent services he rendered to the works in which I have been engaged. Mr. Key, and Mr. Malden, about the same period commenced their distinguished career as teachers of youth, and very soon also devoted their unprofessional services to the general diffusion of knowledge.

Mr. Leonard Horner was the Warden of the London University, when he became a member of the Useful Knowledge committee. In their early stages the new preparatory institution "for affording to young men adequate opportunities for obtaining literary and scientific education at a moderate expense;" and the new society for "imparting useful information to all classes of the community," were considered by many to be engaged in a co-partnership for the political and theological corruption of youths and adults. In some arrangements prescribed by a rigid economy in the finances of each, they did appear to carry on their operations in concert. Thus, when I first attended in Percy Street to read manuscripts and proofs, I had to thread my way up a staircase, on the walls of which Dr. Lardner was hanging models for the illustration of his approaching Lectures on Mechanics. As a necessary consequence, the council of the University, and the committee of the Society, had several members in common. Mr. Horner was not only surrounded with the reflection of his eminent brother's fame, but had that brother's testimony, in

his published letters, to the interest which young Leonard, as early as 1811, took in the education of the people. How well he was qualified for popular instruction was shown by an admirable series of articles on "The Mineral Kingdom" which he contributed to the "Penny Magazine." How ardently and unremittingly he strove to elevate the condition, and provide for the health of the Working Classes, has been manifested by his labours as a Factory Commissioner.

I am still hovering round the remembrance of the earlier members of the Society, whose literary or scientific qualifications gave the assurance that no publication would go forth, deformed by the inaccuracies of superficial information. In a volume written by me ten years ago, I have expressed my opinion upon the system pursued in our committees:—"From the time when the Society commenced a real 'superintendence' of works for the people—when it assisted, by diligent revision and friendly inquiry, the services of its editors—the old vague generalities of popular knowledge were exploded; and the scissors-and-paste school of authorship had to seek for other occupations than Paternoster Row could once furnish. Accuracy was forced upon elementary books as the rule and not the exception. Books professedly 'entertaining' were to be founded upon exact information, and their authorities invariably indicated. No doubt this superintendence in some degree interfered with the free course of original composition, and imparted somewhat of the utilitarian character to everything produced. But it was the only course by which a new aspect could be given to cheap literature, by

showing that the great principles of excellence were common to all books, whether for the learned or the uninformed."* To accomplish such real superintendence there were the services at hand, in the department that may be broadly characterised as Natural History, of Mr. Daniel, in Meteorology; of Mr. De La Beche, in Geology; of Mr. Vigors, in Zoology; and of Dr. Anthony Todd Thomson, in Botany and Vegetable Physiology. With each of these gentlemen I was, in various labours, brought into pleasant and profitable intercourse. I was in more direct and constant intimacy with Mr. William Coulson, the translator of Blumenbach's "Comparative Anatomy." In the composition of my little book on "Menageries," I could always apply, in cases of doubt, to his technical information, and to the wide range of the scientific knowledge of Mr. Vigors. The aid which Dr. Conolly rendered to the diffusion of knowledge was not special or professional. In those departments of what we now call "social science," which include the public health in its largest sense, his experience was always working in companionship with his benevolence. In 1831 we were united in the production of a series which was directly addressed to the working classes. Dr. Conolly brought to this useful labour—of which I shall have to make more particular mention—a lucid style, and an accurate conception of the true mode of reaching the uneducated. "Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar," is as good a maxim for a popular writer, as for a young courtier going forth into the world, to deal with all sorts and conditions of men.

* "The Old Printer and the Modern Press." Murray. 1854.

We had many lawyers on the committee. I have mentioned several who were distinguished for their remarkable scientific qualifications. Others of the bar were accomplished scholars. But no one displayed a more elegant taste than John Herman Merivale. His translations from the Greek Anthology, and from the minor poems of Schiller, have not been condemned to that oblivion which attends the greater number of poetical attempts. The purity and elegance of the whole mind of Mr. Merivale is reflected in his poems. Courteous and sympathizing, I look back upon my occasional intercourse with him with respect almost bordering upon affection. Mr. George Cornewall Lewis brought his various high qualifications to the service of the Society at a later period, when he became a contributor to its publications. I mention him among the lawyers, for before he joined the Useful Knowledge committee he had been called to the bar. Of the elder lawyers, no one was more valuable to the society than Mr. James Manning—perhaps the most profound of the historical and antiquarian lawyers of his time. His accurate information upon many abstruse legal matters was amply displayed when he became one of the most important contributors to the "Penny Cyclopædia." Mr. David Jardine was also a most useful contributor to the legal department of the Cyclopædia, and was the author of "Criminal Trials," published in the Library of Entertaining Knowledge—a valuable contribution to our constitutional history. Let me not omit to mention the youngest of the lawyers amongst us—Mr. Thomas Falconer, who was called to the bar in 1830. He inherited literary tastes, and was an acute as well as a modest critic

upon the unpublished volumes and articles that were submitted for his revision.

Mr. John Wood (afterwards chairman of the Inland Revenue) was at the bar. He was skilful in financial and statistical matters, and greatly assisted in a vigilant administration of the Society's pecuniary affairs. Of a higher character of mind was Mr. James Loch, the auditor for the management of the vast properties of the Duke of Sutherland and Lord Francis Egerton. He had a hard battle to sustain against that class of philanthropists who contended that the removal of a wretched cottier tenantry by emigration, to make room for the influences of capital, was harsh and unfeeling. Mr. Loch vindicated his measures with signal ability. The time was to come when the Irish famine would teach us what a happiness it was for the Highlands, that there was a man who had the courage to carry out his just conceptions of the duty of a great landed proprietor. Some years of cordial intercourse with Mr. James Loch satisfied me that a sound benevolence, combined with a clear intellect, was the basis of his character.

I have finally to turn to a knot of men, eminent in the political annals of our country. They might at first view be regarded as the Corinthian capitals of our edifice. But this would only be a half-truth. Lord John Russell, Lord Auckland, Lord Althorp, Mr. Denman, Mr. Spring Rice, Sir Henry Parnell, were always ready to work as members of our committee, even after they had been called to the highest offices of the State. After the Reform era I have sat at the monthly dinner with five Cabinet Ministers, to whom it appeared that their duty was

to carry forward that advancing intelligence of the people which had conducted them to power, and which would afford the best security that liberal opinions and democratic violence should not be in concert, as the "one increasing purpose" was working out the inevitable changes of society and government. The first poet of the generation that was immediately to follow them has probably shadowed out the convictions that made Ministers of State zealous educationists:

> "Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
> And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns."
> *Locksley Hall.*

It was not only in the meetings of our committees that I had the advantage, for my editorial guidance, of the opinions of men of accurate minds and sound information; but I was frequently also in correspondence with those who took a more than common interest in particular works. Such a work was that well-known contribution to the "Library of Entertaining Knowledge," which first established the reputation of Mr. George Lillie Craik as a sound thinker and an accomplished writer. To myself, individually, the recollection of that autumn of 1828 is especially dear, for it saw the commencement of an intimacy which ripened into the unbroken friendship of six-and-thirty years. In the preliminary stages of discussion on the objects and mode of treatment of a book such as this, which was to embrace a vast number of illustrative anecdotes of the love of knowledge overcoming the opposition of circumstances, there were necessarily different estimates of the value of scientific and literary studies, whether "for

use," or "for delight," or "for ornament." The great distinction between the love of knowledge for its own sake, and the love of knowledge as the means of worldly advancement, may be traced very distinctly in the two popular volumes of Mr. Craik, and the equally popular "Self Help" of Mr. Smiles. Mr. Craik's views upon this cardinal point are very clearly expressed in a letter written to me by him in the autumn of 1829, but having no date except the day of the week (a very perplexing custom for the historian or biographer). His views are so interesting, that I make no apology for the length of the quotation:—

"Our concern, it appears to me, is neither with individuals who have *in any way* been exalted from one region of society to another, nor even with such as have been chiefly the authors of their own exaltation,—for the fact of their exaltation is not at all the one upon which we wish to fix attention, even although we should make it out to have been in every case the consequence of their abilities and attainments. What, then, is our subject? Not the *triumphs* of genius, nor of perseverance, nor even of perseverance in the pursuit of knowledge, because it is not the *success* of the effort, at least in a gross and worldly sense, we would point attention to; nor is it by any means what is called *genius* to which we are exclusively to confine ourselves, while we still less mean to include every *species* of perseverance. But we want a category which shall embrace, for example, the cases at once of Lady Mary Wortley Montague, of Franklin, of all, in short, who, whether in humble or in high life, have pursued knowledge with ardour, and distinctly

evidenced, by the seductions they resisted or the difficulties they encountered and overcame for her sake, that she was the first object of their affections; and that the pursuit of her, even without any reference to either the wealth, the power, or the distinction, which she might bring them, was, in their estimation, its own sufficient reward. It appears to me, then, clearly, that our title must be, not Anecdotes of Self-taught Genius at all, for that is greatly too limited, but *Anecdotes of the Love of Knowledge*—that being, in truth, the one distinction which we find common to all the examples we would embrace, as well as the disposition which we mean chiefly to excite and foster."

Mr. Craik had written a preliminary dissertation, in the sound views of which Mr. Brougham expressed himself to me as generally coinciding. But in a portion of a letter, dated from Westmoreland in September, 1828, (and I judge, therefore, to have preceded by a month or two the letter from Mr. Craik which I have quoted,) Mr. Brougham takes a different view of the range of such a work as that proposed: "His (Mr. Craik's) idea of the line to be drawn as to self-educated men in modern times, is also quite correct; but we must, nevertheless, confine the examples to cases which are quite plainly those of men who have greatly altered their situation by force of merit. As Watt, Arkwright, Franklin, Burns, Bloomfield, Mendelssohn—making the ground of division or classification *self-exaltation* rather than self-education, though they often will coincide. This field is quite large enough for one book; but the work might be followed by another comprehending the rest of it, and including all self-taught

Genius in the larger sense. To give an example—I should certainly exclude Newton, though, like Pascal, he taught himself mathematics; also Granville Sharpe, though he raised himself by his merit to great fame; but he was grandson of the Archbishop of York, and could not be said to alter his station in life. I look forward to Mr. Craik's labours as of the greatest use to the Society, and to the good cause; having the greatest confidence in his sound principles, and a very high opinion of his talents."

This interesting discussion was continued between Mr. Brougham, Mr. Hill, Mr. Craik, and myself, till it was seen how the opposite views could be resolved into a general agreement. I have before me Mr. Brougham's *proof* of Mr. Craik's first volume. To Mr. Brougham is to be assigned the merit of giving to the book in this proof the title which has come to be one of the commonest forms of speech:

"THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE UNDER DIFFICULTIES."

The title originally stood;—

"THE LOVE OF KNOWLEDGE OVERCOMING DIFFICULTIES IN ITS PURSUIT."

CHAPTER VII.

DURING the spring of 1830 I am engaged in carrying forward the regular monthly publication of the Library of Entertaining Knowledge, which was issued in half volumes. I am also occupied in writing a second volume of "The Menageries." Important events are at hand. The confirmed ill-health of George IV. was the chief subject of political interest, for most persons were looking forward to the inevitable dissolution of Parliament, which would follow the accession of a new King. Yet the greater number of the Londoners were more agitated by a change that was proceeding—the metamorphosis of the old watchman into the new police—than by the approaching transition from the fourth George to the fourth William. There were many silly people who thought that our liberties were coming to an end when a dozen tall fellows in a blue uniform were seen issuing from their station to patrol the streets, unarmed with sword or pistol. Ruffians, and thieves, and dirty little boys insulted them; and sometimes there was a serious affray, in which the guardians of the peace were openly defied. I looked, one afternoon, from my windows in Pall Mall East, and beheld what was really a formidable street riot, in which the conduct of the rioters was as brutal as that of the police was forbearing. "Down with the

Peelers!" was the cry that came with a gathering mob that rushed forth from the narrow and dirty Whitcomb Street, and went on, to the terror of shop-keepers and passengers, till large re-inforcements arrived, and the mob fled, as they always will flee, before combined and vigorous action.

George IV. died on the 26th of June. The oath of allegiance to King William IV. having been taken by peers and commoners, the business of Parliament commenced on the 29th, and after a somewhat stormy three weeks, it was prorogued by the King on the 23rd of July. In the royal speech the general tranquillity of Europe was adverted to as an object of congratulation. On Monday morning, the 26th of July, three Ordinances of the King of France were published, which shook Paris to its centre, as by a social earthquake. These unconstitutional decrees, which suspended the liberty of the periodical press, dissolved the Chamber of Deputies, and lessened the number of the people's representatives, produced what is known as the Revolution of July. Never did any event of foreign politics more deeply and widely stir the feelings of the British people. At the commencement of another week, the three days of the barricades had snatched the sovereignty of France from the incapable hands of the elder branch of the Bourbons; the Duke of Orleans had consented to exercise the functions of Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom; the Chamber of Deputies was again opened, and a large majority, after a few days' debate, declared that the urgent interests of the French nation called the Duke of Orleans to the throne.

For several weeks in our country this great French

revolution was the one absorbing topic of thought and speech. The sympathy of the British people with the revolutionists was a solid feeling of satisfaction that a "royal rebellion against society" had been signally defeated. These expressive four words are those by which Dr. Arnold characterised the cause of this great outbreak. In a letter of the 24th of August, he writes to his friend the Rev. George Cornish: "It seems to me a most blessed revolution, spotless beyond all example in history, and the most glorious instance of a royal rebellion against society, promptly and energetically repressed, that the world has yet seen. It magnificently vindicates the cause of knowledge and liberty, showing how humanizing to all classes of society are the spread of thought and information, and improved political institutions; and it lays the crimes of the last revolution just in the right place, the wicked aristocracy, that had so brutalized the people by its long iniquities that they were like slaves broken loose when they first bestirred themselves." * In the same spirit, Mr. Brougham writes to me, in the middle of August, from Lancaster: "I give you much joy of these grand events. The peaceful and moderate conduct of the French Liberals is everything for the cause of sound opinion and good government. I find all rational Tories are of this mind, and my support in Yorkshire was almost as much from them as any other quarter. Then what a thing that our friend M. de Broglie, *Minister of Instruction*, is Prime Minister!"

On the 16th of August the deposed King of

* Life of Dr. Arnold, vol. i. p. 264.

France had embarked at Cherbourg, for England. The probability of a reactionary movement seemed to be at an end, and whilst all France, according to M. Guizot, hastened to Paris, many of the tourists of England, turning from the picturesque of Italy and Switzerland, went to look upon the spots which had already attained historical celebrity;—spots where for three days workmen in blouses had stood up against a regular soldiery, till a small band of the Chamber of Deputies, at first hesitating and timid, proclaimed, "France is free! Absolute power elevated its standard; the heroic population of Paris has beaten it down." Mr. Matthew Hill and I were strongly moved by "these grand events." We determined not only to have a holiday in Paris, but to collect there as many facts from eye-witnesses during the three days as to give additional interest to a narrative which might form a portion of the Library of Entertaining Knowledge. My excellent friend M. Tarver, of whom I have spoken in the previous volume, agreed to accompany us. We set out on the evening of the 30th of August, and the Dover mail arrived in time for the steam-packet to Calais. Englishmen who had never crossed the Channel were rushing from London and the provinces, to look upon the scenes, the descriptions of which, during the recess of Parliament, filled every newspaper. A fellow-passenger in the mail asked permission to breakfast with us when we had reached the well-known *salle à manger* of the original Meurice. Our friend Tarver catered in the mode which he thought would be most agreeable to us as citizens of the world. Our chance acquaintance was rather dismayed at our solid refection of cutlets, pâté de foie gras, and a couple of

bottles of Lafitte, but he bore the infliction of the share of the bill with a true English magnanimity.

In our journey to Paris, we were surprised to find, by talking with the people in the villages where we changed horses, and in the towns where we dined or slept, how little was known with any exactness of the circumstances that had been happening in the capital. They had no news to tell us that was not a week old; they had no conjectures to offer upon the probability of future events. We went out of our direct way to see Chantilly. The palace of the great Condé had been destroyed in the first revolution; but the park and gardens, which Delille had made famous as "*ce beau* Chantilly," still flourished. At the time of our visit an unusual gloom hung over the place, for a mysterious tragedy had there been enacted a very few weeks before. The house was shut up. The old Duke de Bourbon had been laid in the vaults of St. Denis to be terrified no more by the echoes of another revolution. The huntsman of the duke was an Englishman. Of him I learnt much of the condition of the peasantry in the forest of Chantilly, and was led to think there might be even a worse lot than that of a Dorsetshire labourer. "A severe winter," said the huntsman, "is a blessing to the poor in this district, for horses often fall on the slippery roads, and breaking their legs, are killed and left on the wayside. Then, and almost only then, the cottagers have a taste of fresh meat."

Our sojourn in Paris for a fortnight was not a period of idleness. The public resorts presented unusual objects of interest. On the evening of our arrival we dine at a restaurateur's, the private meal at the Hôtel de Windsor not offering sufficient food

for our curiosity. Amongst the diners were many young men of the National Guard, which body of the civic militia had been suppressed by Charles X. in 1827, but had started up again to take its share in the fight for liberty in July, 1830. During our visit to Paris, M. de Lafayette related with characteristic animation how he was at breakfast on the 29th of July, at his seat at La Grange, when the news of the Ordinances came; how he hastened to Paris to organize the National Guard; and how the young men who were at the head of the movement asking him for his name as their chief, he at once gave his assent. The uniform of the National Guard, when we were in Paris on the 2nd of September, was seen in every quarter. One of my friends was moved to enthusiasm at the immediate presence at the restaurant of some of the heroes of the three days, and he stood up, to the visible surprise of the party in regimentals at another table, to propose the health of the gentlemen of the National Guard. The compliment was received with the usual politeness of the nation. We fraternized, and had a pleasant hour of warlike anecdote.

No time was lost by my friends and myself in setting out upon a tour of inspection of the streets and quays which had been memorable scenes of the great conflict. It required, however, some minute observation to trace the external evidence of the warfare that had raged only a month before. In a great battle-field, such as that of Waterloo, where thousands have perished amidst standing corn, nature very soon covers the traces of bloodshed with her own green mantle. In a populous city, where men have

been fighting from house to house, regardless of the temporary injury to private property, the ravages are very soon obliterated by the usual course of industry. The work and the pleasure of the world goes on as before, and in another generation the minute local associations of stirring events have ceased to have any abiding place in the memory. But to me and my fellow-travellers there was not one of these spots of passing celebrity which had not an excitement for our curiosity.

Without stopping to regard the objects of our special search near the Rue de Rivoli, where we lodge, we hire an open carriage, and driving along the Quai de la Cité, proceed at once to the Hôtel de Ville. In the open space opposite the hôtel there was a very unusual display of merchandize, which told of something different from the peaceful exchange of the necessaries of life. Muskets, pistols, swords, bayonets, many of them rusty, and most in a dilapidated condition, were lying on the pavement for chance sale. Here we got into talk with a smart and intelligent young man, who had his arm in a sling, having been wounded by a sabre cut. He was a nail-maker, of the name of Louis Jean Deré. He told us how a journeyman printer had given him the news of the Ordinances, and how they went out the next morning to fight side by side, and were fighting up and down the city during the three days of conflict. Here was exactly a man to tell us something more than we could learn from chance observation, so we agreed that he should accompany us in our progress, and a very useful and trustworthy guide we found him. Opposite the Hôtel de Ville was the shop of a grocer, of the name of Rivière, who, as a

branch of his trade, sold wine and brandy. Deré pointed out this store as a place that bore signal evidence of the affray. The good man was proud to show us his broken window-sashes and his riddled shelves. He was more proud to tell us how one of his sons had been a school-fellow of one of the young princes of the house of Orleans. The passion for relics, which most of us, I suppose, cannot refrain from indulging, was displayed by me in a way which did not much command the after-sympathy of my household. On a peg in the shop hung a pewter wine measure, of about the capacity of a pint, which had been pierced by a ball. I bore it off in triumph, at a fancy price, contemplating libations to liberty on future days of July. I am afraid it was too vulgar a utensil ever to make an appearance at my table, and it went, I suppose, the way of all useless things which encumber tidy servants who have no respect for enthusiasm—not even for antique images with broken noses—who deal cruelly with our most sacred treasures of antiquarianism in the way that a wicked housemaid scoured the shield of Martinus Scriblerus.

The series of "Entertaining Knowledge" contains two volumes entitled "Paris and its Historical Scenes." They were written by Mr. Craik. The first volume is one especially of permanent interest, as relating to the growth of the French capital under the old monarchy; and describes its more remarkable edifices and situations in connexion with the great events of which that city had been the theatre. Nor is the second volume less valuable, as continuing the succession of sketches, held together by the thread of local associations. To bring together in a condensed narrative the obscure records of the

middle ages, and the pamphlet of the hour,—to tell the story of the Barricades of the League, of the Three Days of 1830,—was a labour worthy of a trustworthy writer. It is sufficient to refer to this volume to render it altogether unnecessary to go over the scenes that my friends and I traced during our fortnight's exploration. I have therein indicated some of the objects that especially attracted my notice through personal information, which passages are referred to by the letters S. T. I have some notes before me of various details by our companion, Mr. Tarver, whose knowledge of the language which he had spoken from his childhood, saved us from many a difficulty and mistake. One of his notes as to the general demeanour of those with whom we conversed, principally mechanics, is worth transcribing: "Nothing can equal the calm and unpretending manner with which the mass of the people speak of the three glorious days. Satisfied with having successfully repelled the act of tyranny, they resumed their occupations, even apparently unconscious of having done anything to deserve the gratitude of their fellow-citizens." From a friend of ten years earlier with whom I was then associated in the "Architects and Antiquaries' Club"—a most pleasant society, of which the elder Pugin and other eminent artists were members—I derived valuable information for the materials of the projected book. Mr. Crecy was engaged in the building of a magnificent square in the Rue St. Lazare, and had seen some remarkable traits of the scrupulous honesty and excellent organization of some of the heroes of the three days. A band of men having come to demand his tools and his timber for the formation of a barri-

cade, took off every article which could possibly be useful to them. Not a crowbar or a pickaxe, not a scaffold pole or a deal batten, not the minutest piece of wood, was lost. Everything was restored to Mr. Crecy, who did not estimate his damage at the value of five shillings.

Of the inner political life of the Paris of 1830, I had a few glimpses. Lafayette gave a weekly reception at the Hôtel which he inhabited, as commander of the National Guard. The spacious rooms were crowded, not only with officers and privates of the civic militia, but with deputies and journalists, with men of science and of art, with foreigners of all climes. I renewed here my acquaintance with a clever Frenchman, M. St. George, who had been a useful contributor to the "London Magazine." He was here quite at home, for his democratic principles had always been very manifest, and were somewhat difficult of restraint in the moderate-toned miscellany which St. Leger and I conducted. He pointed out to me the various celebrities, but there was none on whom I looked with more respect than upon the venerable man who had fought with Washington in 1777, who had organized the French National Guard in 1789, who had incurred the hatred of the Jacobins in 1792, by his denunciation of the outrages committed against Louis XVI., who had retired into private life when the ambition of Bonaparte seemed to render liberty impossible, who finally a month before I saw him had headed the revolt of the people against Charles X., and believed that he had established freedom upon a constitutional basis when he proposed Louis Philippe as king. The fine old man was now in his seventy-third year, courteous, high-

spirited as became one who belonged to the chivalrous days of the old aristocracy; identified with the hopes and feelings of the class more especially regarded as the people, in whose moral and intellectual progress he saw something like a security for the future against a return of the storms which he had witnessed.

I had an opportunity, in company with Mr. Hill, of being present at an entertainment of a very unusual character in France. The London system of public dinners, for social or political purposes, was then comparatively unknown in Paris. We had been introduced to a celebrated man of letters who was said to have had the not very enviable distinction of having been private secretary to Robespierre. He was now the editor of one of the most voluminous and ambitious periodical works in the French language—"Le Bulletin Universel," which had its ramifications throughout Europe. He had his soirées in an immense library, set apart for the use of contributors of all nations, where they might peruse the new books and journals of their own languages, and digest them upon the systematic principle of French editors into elaborate reviews and smart paragraphs. I was well acquainted with the "Bulletin Universel," for in the third volume of the "London Magazine" I had introduced a new department, called the "Journal of Facts," in which I referred to the Bulletin as a monthly publication averaging 700 or 800 octavo pages—"a most valuable store-house of every new fact that is called into light by the communication of mind throughout the world." I was happy to intrust this department to a gentleman well qualified to conduct it by his knowledge of

foreign languages. Mr. Charles Atkinson rendered me this literary assistance several years before he had become the able and esteemed secretary of University College. Mr. Hill and I were invited to join a large party of the *collaborateurs* of "Le Bulletin Universel," who were to assemble at an early hour of a coming afternoon to dine at a pleasant tea-garden outside the barriers. The party was a large one. There was a mixture of tongues—French, German, Italian, but only one Englishman besides ourselves. We were happy to recognize the distinguished member of parliament who had written the best book on English finance—Sir Henry Parnell, a member of our Useful Knowledge Committee. The guests were being seated, when I took the liberty of mentioning to the president the political eminence of our compatriot, venturing to refer to the custom in England, that men of high mark should have a seat at the upper end of the table. With perfect suavity he informed me that in France the principle of equality was so recognized that he could make no distinctions. The guests took their places *par hasard*. The eating went on very rapidly, for the object of the meeting was, that certain fiery spirits should deliver exciting orations. It was as much like a platform assembly as could be imagined, with the single exception, that a good deal of wine was drunk. But there were no toasts given out by the chair; no standing up for three times three; no speeches such as England was so fertile in producing, when the honoured one declared for the fiftieth time, that this was the proudest moment of his life. But there were speeches at this French political assembly which were really worth listening

to, if only for the intensity with which the rising democratic spirit of Europe was thus embodied. One of the most remarkable of these speakers—worthy of note not only for his ability but for the adventurous circumstances in which he had recently been placed,—was M. Potter, the famous Belgian. Banished in the previous April under a sentence of conspiracy against the government of the Netherlands, he had returned from France after the days of July, and had headed the revolt of Brussels on the 25th of August. It was about the 10th of September when we saw him after his return to Paris, when the first insurrection of Brussels had been put down, and only a few days before he returned thither, to organize that second insurrection, which ended in the separation of Belgium from Holland. One little incident of this dinner I well remember, as moving us to repeated merriment in intervals of the most solemn displays of fervid oratory. A little boy with a fiddle crept to the side of the three Englishmen, who probably looked less stern than some around us, and requested that we would ask the president for permission to exhibit his skill for the entertainment of the company. We ventured to convey this request to the chairman, who graciously consented. In a pause of the speechification, the little fellow mounted upon a stool, played with considerable spirit the long suppressed air of La Marseillaise, equally distasteful to Bonaparte and Bourbon; renewed his exertions during another pause, and went round with his hat to collect sous from the company.

My attention was agreeably directed in Paris to inquiries of a less exciting nature than the circum-

stances attending the Revolution of the three days. In the preparation of the two volumes of my "Menageries," I had studied the habits of the animals there described in the small collection that was then still preserved in the Tower of London, in the caravans of Bartholomew Fair, and best of all, in the gardens of the Zoological Society. Those gardens, first opened to the public in the spring of 1828, were in 1830 far removed from their present perfection. The space enclosed was comparatively small, the buildings were not of the best construction with regard to the health of the animals; the collection itself contained some very beautiful specimens, especially of the carnivora, but did not then offer the noble assemblage of living curiosities, some almost unique, which have now been gathered together here, through the munificence of scientific travellers and the liberal expenditure of the Society, that has thus raised up one of the most useful and the most popular institutions of London. I was curious to see in Paris how far our spirit of associated enterprise in England promised successfully to compete with the state expenditure of France. We had the rare advantage of visiting the Jardin des Plantes under the guidance of the illustrious Cuvier. During the outbreak of the Revolution of the three days he was in England, but he returned soon after Louis Philippe had been called to the throne, to continue his course of lectures on the history and progress of the natural sciences. His recent visit to England rendered his conversation during our walks through the gardens and the museum peculiarly interesting. He had seen that we were making an attempt in the right direction towards the formation of a great

national menagerie, but he had also seen the effect of limited means in confining the larger quadrupeds in miserable cages, instead of exhibiting them where-ever possible, under the influence of their natural habits. I might have told him, and perhaps did so, that, a short time before, the young elephant of our Zoological Gardens, shut up in a cage on one side of a passage about four feet wide, had, whilst I was looking at some animal in the opposite cage, inserted his trunk into my outer pocket searching for a cake, and not easily withdrawing it, had dragged me up to the bars and then tore my coat into ribbons. The amiable desire of the man who was then confessedly the greatest naturalist in Europe, to impart a portion of his rare knowledge to a listener who had no scientific pretensions, but who might be able to present some truths to the popular understanding, left a deep impression upon my memory. The unpretending simplicity of his manner was in him nothing remarkable, for I have ever noticed simplicity as the leading characteristic of men of the highest talents and acquirements.

Mr. Hill and I left Paris about the 16th of September. We travelled to Rouen and thence on to Havre. Here we heard the distressing news of the fatal accident which had befallen Mr. Huskisson at the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, on the 15th of September. Deeply felt as was the calamity which accompanied this auspicious event of the opening, there was scarcely any educated person in England who did not hail the triumph of the locomotive engine as the commencement of a change which would produce more permanent effect upon the progress of society than any

revolutionary movement—any substitution of one set of political administrators for another set, at which most of the outs are ready to exclaim—"Patience, and shuffle the cards." When the great political economist who led the way to commercial freedom, perished under the wheels of the "Rocket" engine, he might, as the trains first began to move through the wondrous power of steam, have thought that there was at that hour being accomplished a new manifestation of the most terrific force in the universe, subdued and regulated into perfect organization and discipline. At the meeting of 1824, for erecting a monument to James Watt, Mr. Huskisson had described one man as directing steam into the bowels of the earth, another placing it upon the surface of the waters, and he added, "a third, perhaps, and a fourth, are destined to apply this mighty power to other purposes, not less important than those which it has already produced." Yet probably George Stephenson, who was destined to work out the "other purposes," could scarcely have filled his imagination with a thought of the extent to which the locomotive would be applied, when, in a letter addressed to the editor of the Companion to the Almanac, in October, 1829, he said, "The 'Rocket' locomotive engine, which gained the premium of 500*l.*, is about to be put on Chat Moss, to drag the gravel for finishing the permanent way, and there is no doubt but a proportionate reduction will take place—besides doing away with the wear and tear of the horse-track which, on all new-made roads, is so considerable." This is Eclipse dragging a sand-cart.

I return from this interesting trip to resume my usual tasks. My literary employment during 1830,

in connexion with the "Library of Entertaining Knowledge," could scarcely be called light, and it had been somewhat troublesome. Several manuscripts came into my hands, valuable as materials for books, but requiring an immensity of labour to prune them of their superfluities, and interweave passages which would impart to them a more artistical character than they originally presented. Such were three volumes written by Mr. James Rennie, entitled "Insect Architecture," "Insect Transformations," "Insect Miscellanies." His manuscripts contained a mass of truly valuable original observations upon the habits of insects; and feeling their value I laboured hard to make them more readable, and especially to trace those evidences of Design, which lift the mind, by details far more entertaining than the inventions of romance, to the constant feeling of the Living Principle of all things. These volumes were the main cause of Mr. Rennie obtaining the honourable position of Professor of Zoology, at King's College. He was a man of jealous and irritable feelings, and had the imprudence to make an invidious attack upon some eminent men of science, recklessly accusing them of irreligion. Mr. Rennie's new-born zeal had not the effect of advancing him in the favour of the authorities of King's College; who, although they differed from the founders of the University of London (now University College) upon the question of direct religious instruction in the classes, were far too able and liberal to join in the vulgar prejudices with which science was at this period very frequently surrounded. Rather to mark the temper of the times, than with a desire of drawing attention to my own writings, I give an

extract from my volume of the "Library of Entertaining Knowledge,"—"The Elephant, principally viewed in relation to Man," which was published in 1830. This passage forms the conclusion of a chapter on the "Fossil Remains of Elephants:"—"In leading the mind of the reader to the contemplation of those remote periods, whose history, dark and imperfect as it may be, is yet written in legible characters within the soil on which we tread, it may occur to some few that we deserve the reproach of the amiable and pious Cowper, against those who—

> 'drill and bore
> The solid earth, and from the strata there
> Extract a register, by which we learn
> That he who made it, and revealed its date
> To Moses, was mistaken in its age.'

The professors of geology have too long been open to such reproaches, partly from the misplaced zeal with which they attempted to associate an infant science with theories crudely conceived, and built up without a comprehensive knowledge of a great body of facts; partly from the prejudices of those who fancied they saw a moral danger in the pursuit of the science itself. But the time is past, we hope for ever, when the diligent and modest student of Nature, in any of her departments, has to fear the same sort of spirit which Galileo had to encounter; and which still, in some Catholic states where intolerance predominates, holds the sublime discoveries of Newton as little better than atheism. Now and then, in our own days, an ignorant or a crafty controversialist attempts to repress the progress of inquiry, by proclaiming that some particular course of

scientific investigation leads to irreligion; but, in her own peaceful and sober courage, true religion feels that she has nothing to fear from the utmost hardihood of research, and nothing to gain from the servile timidity of those who thus exclusively claim to be her supporters."*

The elections to the new Parliament were over in England. The organization of parties under the Duke of Wellington was threatened with a speedy disruption. The Liberals had gained ground in the contests. Large constituencies had manifested, in a remarkable manner, that the question of Reform in Parliament could no longer be dealt with in the summary manner in which, three years before, Birmingham had been denied a member in the place of the disfranchised East Retford. Mr. Brougham, after exertions of unparalleled activity, in addressing the freeholders half-a-dozen times a day in as many different places, was triumphantly returned for Yorkshire. Parliament met on the 2nd of November. In the very first moment of debate, he who had become the real leader of the House of Commons—the representative of a great county instead of a nomination borough—

* Sir J. Emerson Tennent, in his "Sketches of the Natural History of Ceylon," citing a passage from my little work, obligingly says, "It will be seen that I have quoted repeatedly from this volume, because it is the most compendious and careful compilation with which I am acquainted of the information previously existing regarding the elephant. The author incorporates no speculations of his own, but has most diligently and agreeably arranged all the facts collected by his predecessors." I may add that in exhibiting the elephant in "relation to man," I brought together a body of historical facts as to his employment by the nations of antiquity, and by the people of the East in their wars. A most interesting French book on this subject by M. St. Amand had not then been published.

asserted the constitutional right of the Commons to do whatever business they pleased before the consideration of the King's speech, and gave notice of a motion for Reform. In the House of Lords, the Duke of Wellington declared that the Legislature possessed the full and entire confidence of the country, and that he would oppose every measure for what was called Reform. Then was the land agitated by conflicting opinions, such as had scarcely before manifested themselves, with equal intensity, for a generation. The declaration of the Duke of Wellington, on the 2nd of November, was followed by the overthrow of his ministry on the 16th. Sir Henry Parnell, who at the dinner at the guinguette at Paris was denied a seat of honour, was the immediate instrument of accomplishing this change, by his motion on the subject of the Civil List, which left the Ministry in a large minority.

The list of the ministry of England, which appeared in the British Almanac for 1831, was made up to the 15th of November, 1830. In that list Wellington was Prime Minister; Lyndhurst, Lord Chancellor; Goulburn, Chancellor of the Exchequer; Peel, Home Secretary. "Never," says Sidney Smith, "was any administration so completely and suddenly destroyed." Had such an immediate destruction been confidently anticipated, I doubt whether we should have sent forth the list in the Society's Almanac, afterwards issuing a leaf to be substituted by the purchaser. In a week, Grey was Prime Minister; Brougham, Lord Chancellor; Althorp, Chancellor of the Exchequer; Melbourne, Home Secretary.

I have mentioned in another place a fact which I had known in 1832, and which I could repeat in

1862, without any violation of confidence—that Lord Althorp almost forced the Great Seal upon Mr. Brougham, who exclaimed again and again, "What! leave the House of Commons?" * The Lord Chancellor's patent had been made out, which obviated the temporary necessity of his longer sitting in the House of Lords as Speaker without being a Peer. Having received a note from Lord Brougham to come to his private room in the House of Lords before the afternoon meeting of the House, I had a very hurried interview. The time was expired for his moving into the House. The Mace and Purse were in the passage; anxious ushers were about the door. "I can only stay to say a word," he exclaimed; "advertise Paley to-morrow morning." He rushed along as nimbly as that officer of Elizabeth, of whom it was said—

"The grave Lord-Keeper led the brawls."

The "panting" Mace-bearer "toiled after him in vain." I stepped out of the room and saw the officials looking somewhat as the royal ushers of Versailles might have looked when shoestrings heralded the Revolution, and Bastiles and buckles were doomed. I ventured to say to one of these solemn men in black, "Is that quite regular?"—"Regular, sir? oh dear! The last was bad enough, but this one!—Oh dear!" Chaos was come again.

I returned home, meditating as I went, upon a new example of the versatility of genius. A Lord Chancellor who had been only a week on the woolsack—perplexed as one might have thought with

* Popular History of England, vol. viii. p. 265.

the technicalities of Chancery, with which he was unfamiliar—the orator upon whom a great party mainly relied for carrying through schemes of improvement which were essentially necessary to maintain the power which they had won—that a man so burdened should resolve at the same time singly to undertake a labour which was best fitted for the abstracted student, seemed to me almost inexplicable. And yet the announcement which I sent forth was no idle flourish. The plan of the book had been conceived a year before, when it was thought that Mr. Brougham and several men of science might be induced to work together in its production. If I recollect rightly, there were some difficulties in completing such an arrangement. The sudden resolve of December, 1830, cut the knot of this difficulty, and so "Paley's Natural Theology, with Notes and an Introductory Discourse by Henry Lord Brougham," was advertised as in preparation. I had been astonished, and so was the world to be.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE Grey ministry came into power surrounded by circumstances of domestic politics that might well be considered alarming. After the harvest of 1830, there had broken out in the southern agricultural counties what, without exaggeration, may be called a servile insurrection. The ignorance of the labouring population of these districts had become too appalling to be any longer concealed under the most meagre and unsatisfactory attempts of the gentry and the clergy, during the past twenty years, to impart the least portion of knowledge to the young, or to evince any care for the condition of the adults beyond the grudging bounty of the Poor-rate, and an extra dole of bread at Christmas. The thinking portion of the population could not forbear to exclaim,—is it not monstrous, in a country which possesses endowed schools in every town, which has National schools, and Lancasterian schools, and Sunday schools in every village; and, above all, which has ten thousand beneficed clergymen distributed over the whole land, that any such state of ignorance should exist as would lead to rick-burning and machine-breaking?

The outrages of the peasantry in many parishes, especially of Hampshire, Wiltshire, Kent, Berkshire, and Buckinghamshire, had spoken with a voice of

terror to those who had lulled themselves into a shameless neglect of their duty, by the miserable belief that in the intellectual darkness of the labourers consisted their own security from such organizations as the Luddism of manufacturing districts. No vigorous measures had been taken to repress the new-born frenzy of the agricultural slave —the successor of the ancient serf (but without the protection of his lord)—until, on the 8th of December, a circular was addressed by the recently appointed Home Secretary to the magistracy of the various counties, calling upon them to act with energy and firmness, and to yield nothing to intimidation, either as respected the demand for a uniform rate of wages or the non-employment of thrashing machines. On the 18th of December a special commission was opened at Winchester, when two hundred and seventy persons were arraigned for incendiary acts, or for the destruction of machinery.

The Useful Knowledge Society had, in November, commenced the issue of a small series entitled "The Working Man's Companion," to be published occasionally, at the price of a shilling. The first volume, chiefly prepared by Dr. Conolly, called "Cottage Evenings," was commended by Dr. Arnold, for "its plain and sensible tone;" but he is hard upon what he calls its "cold deism." He is equally severe upon "the folly" of a little monthly publication conducted I believe by a divine who was afterwards a bishop—"The Cottager's Monthly Visitor." At the beginning of December I conceived the possibility of addressing the labourer and the mechanic upon the subject of machinery, by reasoning with them without attempting the slightest distinction between the intellectual

capacity of the poor and of the rich; for in truth upon the question whether machinery had not a tendency to abridge employment and reduce wages, there was nearly as large an amount of error existing amongst the middle classes, and even amongst some of the upper, as amongst those we were in the habit of denominating the working classes. It was not likely that a little book of a sober and argumentative character which contained no appeals to the passions, which rested the strength of its assaults against long cherished prejudices upon a battery of facts, brought to bear on one most vulnerable point, should save a single thrashing machine from the infuriate hand of an unreasoning peasant; but no good seed is utterly thrown away, even if it fall at first upon a barren soil. It would scarcely become me to speak of the almost unparalleled success of that volume. Some portion of its original popularity may be ascribed to the circumstance of its having being attributed, without the slightest foundation, to the pen of Lord Brougham. Within a month of its publication, at the beginning of January, 1831, I received the formal thanks of the Useful Knowledge Committee, expressed by the chairman of the day, Mr. Spring Rice, who said, perhaps somewhat hyperbolically, that it had effected more good for the repression of outrage than a regiment of horse would have effected in any disturbed county.

The agricultural labourers were not altogether given over to an undiscriminating rage in their *Jacquerie*. In the neighbourhood of Aylesbury they destroyed all the machinery of many farms down even to the common drills, but they could not make up their minds as to the propriety of destroying a

horse-churn. In the same manner there were artisans in many trades who were equally inconsistent in their hostility to machinery. For example: The bookbinders of London took a similar exceptional view of what they considered the evil of substituting the easier way of getting through work for the harder. They objected to a novelty which had begun to be generally used by the master bookbinders. In a paper, dated the 16th December, 1830, nearly five hundred journeymen bookbinders of London and Westminster called upon their employers to give up the use of a machine for *beating* books. Books, before they were bound in leather, were formerly beaten with large hammers upon a stone to make them solid. In my little work I said: "The objection of the bookbinders to the beating-machine offers a remarkable example of the inconsistency of all such objections. The bookbinders have a machine called a plough, for cutting the edges of books, which is, probably, as old as the trade itself. A great deal of labour and a great deal of material are saved by this plough. Why do they not require that a book should be cut with a ruler and a penknife?" The journeymen bookbinders, in a pamphlet of thirty pages, published a very elaborate reply to my assertion, that "the greatest blessing ever conferred upon bookbinders, as a body, was the introduction of this beating (more properly rolling) machine; for it had set at liberty a quantity of mere labour, without skill, to furnish wages to labourers with skill." They contended that the number of journeymen bookbinders out of employ was rapidly on the increase, that the rolling machine was one of the great causes of their distress, and that, commi-

serating their evil lot, some of their employers had agreed to abandon the machine altogether. It may be thought that I have drawn attention somewhat too fully to this instance of short-sightedness on the part of an intelligent body of workmen. I have done so because the progress of knowledge could not have been advanced as it has been during the last half century, had the cost of the material production of books not gone on at a constant rate of diminution, exactly in proportion to the increase of the amount of mental labour also required for their production. Bookbinding is now one of the large manufactures of London, carried on with many scientific applications.* The journeymen bookbinders of 1830, in the metropolis, reckoned their entire number as nearly six hundred. In the census of occupations of 1861 we find that in the metropolitan district there were employed in bookbinding three thousand six hundred and ninety-one males and four thousand and sixty-three females. This prodigious increase of employment has followed the introduction of new machines in every department of bookbinding. "We have rolling-machines to make the book solid; cutting-machines, to supersede the hand-labour of the little instrument called a plough; embossing machines, to produce elaborate raised patterns on leather or cloth; embossing presses, to give the gilt ornament and lettering. These contrivances, and other similar inventions, have not only cheapened books, but have enabled the publisher to give them a permanent instead of a temporary cover, ornamental as well as useful."*

* "Knowledge is Power." 1855.

The "Quarterly Journal of Education" was commenced to be published on the 1st of January, 1831. Although under the superintendence of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, I bore, as publisher, the risk of the undertaking. The control of the committee over the various papers was professedly confined to a general superintendence. Within certain limits it was thought useful to allow contributors a free expression of their views. Such a work, whose object was to diffuse a fair and unbiassed criticism on establishments for education, and on the systems and on the books which constitute their real life and existence, was a novelty in this country. There had, indeed, been published for some years, in London, "The Sunday School Teacher's Magazine and Journal of Education," but the plan of the work commenced in 1831 was essentially different. "It is the opinion of the committee that the general education of those classes of the community who, from their station in society, have the control over that of the poorer classes, is the most important object to which they can direct their attention. They do not intend to neglect either the statistics of the education of the poorer classes, or the books which are used for their instruction, nor any other fact of any kind that concerns so large a part of the population. But the education of that class, on which depends the education of all the rest, demands their especial attention."

The "Journal of Education" was regularly continued during five years. When I state that its editor was Professor Long, whose high qualifications as the conductor of any publication requiring learning and general information, I have briefly adverted to: and

when I add that it numbered amongst its contributors men of such eminence as Dr. Whately, Dr. Thirlwall, and Dr. Arnold, with many heads of schools and teachers engaged in the practical business of instruction, it is scarcely necessary to say that the four thousand pages of which this work consists embrace a mass of information of original value and general interest. They have an historical importance, for in the details of the systems then prevalent in our universities, our public schools, and our establishments for middle-class education, it will be seen that enormous efforts have been made to repair and to reconstruct decayed institutions and systems out of harmony with the character of the age. There was a great work to be accomplished to take the education of all classes out of the hands of incompetent and prejudiced instructors, and to free the young, upon whose judicious training the welfare of another generation would depend, from that discipline which united the extremes of laxity and severity, and that routine which, relying upon forms, so constantly neglected essentials.

As, from the constitution of the Useful Knowledge Society, works on religious subjects were excepted from the critical notices which occupied a considerable part of the Journal, so also any infusion of party politics into its essays or reviews was carefully avoided. There is, however, in the fourth volume a review of Austin's "Province of Jurisprudence Determined," which admirably draws the line between political speculations arising out of party debates, and the principles of positive law and government, with reference to the introduction of political instruction into the education of youth. That review was written by the late Sir George Cornewall Lewis,

and it shows how early he had directed his mind to the consideration of practical statesmanship under its highest philosophical aspects. How true it is, even now, in too frequent instances, that "those who have been concerned for many years in the practical administration of government, in discussing the policy of laws, present or future, or in learning or arguing upon the contents and provisions of laws, hold it an affront if any one offers to teach them what government or law is, and, confounding familiar acquaintance with accurate knowledge, think that they understand everything which is not new or strange to them."

The "Journal of Education" was commenced a month after the accession of the Grey ministry. At the first monthly meeting of the Useful Knowledge Committee following the Christmas vacation, our table presented a scene which lives in my mind as one of national importance. The chambers of the society were then in Gray's Inn Square; but the accommodation therein was quite insufficient for the company expected at the dinner. We met, therefore, at the Gray's Inn Coffee House. I well remember talking with Mr. Lubbock about the extraordinary spectacle of so many men of political importance — cabinet ministers, great officers of state and of the law—assembled in frank fellowship with physicians, professors of education, elders of science, astronomers and mathematicians just rising into note in the world of wider limits than Cambridge, and barristers not yet aspiring to silk gowns. It was really very striking to observe how, as it were, by one simultaneous movement, nearly all the committee had come together to hail the triumph

of liberal opinions. Not a word was spoken of politics. Lord Brougham did not explain how he meant to keep his pledge about Reform. Lord John Russell gave no hint of the scope of the vital measure which the Cabinet was then discussing. It was as practical and common-place a proceeding for confirming minutes and voting small sums for authorship as I ever witnessed. I am not sure whether any new members were elected. I believe it was at another meeting that the proposal of Mr. Hume's name as a member was evaded by a joke—The great economist would take the dots off the *i's*, when a proof came under his correction.

During the month of February one or two came within my observation, as intimates of men in power, who seemed unusually abstracted or unusually volatile. On the 3rd of that month Lord Althorp had informed the House of Commons that the Government plan for amending the representation of the people would be brought forward by Lord John Russell on the 1st of March. The few in the secret talked in this interim with prodigious fluency upon matters in which they felt little interest, like Cinna and Casca debating about the exact point of sunrise when their minds were stirred with the thought of "the dreadful thing" they were to act when the sun had risen. The half confidences, the guesses, the hopes and the fears, the trust and the contempt, which indicated the speculative politicians of either side, were to some a very significant token that a great crisis was approaching.

It is not for me here to indicate, except in the most general manner, the course of parliamentary proceedings on the Reform Bill. The men of influ-

ence with whom I was more immediately connected were far too much engaged to give any marked attention to the ordinary proceedings of the Useful Knowledge Society. In the course of the first stage of the Reform measure there were remarkable separations of ancient friends, and as remarkable unions between men who had been of opposite opinions. Mr. Macaulay had taken a most distinguished position, in the very earliest debates of the session. Mr. Praed, whose youthful prepossessions, if not convictions, were perhaps even stronger than Mr. Macaulay's, was diametrically opposed to him; and yet I could not admit that Praed's maturer opinions were the results of a want of principle, or not feel that he was ungenerously dealt with when one who had been his contemporary in the university, himself taking rank as a man of genius, a poet and a novelist, cast reproaches upon him in Parliament for his opinions when an under-graduate. Yet I could scarcely have expected in those early days of the struggle for Reform that I should have met Mr. Croker and Mr. Praed walking arm-in-arm in the Strand, and each giving me a friendly nod as I passed them. Public men had very soon taken their sides in this great contest, and so indeed had the great body of the middle classes. The majority, however, when they met in the meetings which were held in almost every parish vociferated: "The Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill." During eight weeks of intense excitement, the popular cause was gradually attaining strength without doors, but the opponents of the Government were as steadily gaining ground in divisions upon which the question of a violent or a peaceful revolution depended. At length the king

consented to dissolve Parliament under circumstances of which Lord Campbell truly writes, that the scenes within the Houses "might convey an adequate idea of the tumultuary dissolutions in the times of the Stuarts." There was an illumination in London, with a disgraceful but harmless exhibition of mob violence. Windows were broken, amongst others those of the Duke of Wellington, and the great captain thought it prudent to give his mansion of Apsley House something like the aspect of a beleagured fortress.

The results of the elections throughout the country materially strengthened the popular cause. On the 24th of June, Lord John Russell again obtained leave to bring in the Reform Bill. It finally passed in the House of Commons on the 21st of September. After five nights of debate, unsurpassed in the annals of the English Parliament for the utterances of men who were indeed "the top of eloquence," the House of Lords rejected the Bill by a majority of forty-one. Parliament was again prorogued. Riot and outrage at Derby, and the burning of Nottingham Castle, clouded the hopes of all honest men of either party that the great question might be settled without violence. It was not to be so.

During the proceedings in Parliament of that eventful autumn, I had been occupied in writing a little book that was in some degree a supplement to "The Results of Machinery." It was originally called "The Rights of Industry;" but is better known by its second title, "Capital and Labour." It was especially addressed to working men, to exhibit their rights in connexion with their duties by proving that the interests of every member of society, properly understood, are one and the same. "The

more," I said, "that you perfect in yourselves the character of industrious, temperate, intelligent, and orderly members of the community, the more you will advance the interests of the great nation of which you form so important a part,—and the more you will succeed in obtaining a full share of those national blessings which are the invariable results of Security of Property and Freedom of Industry, established in their just relations to each other by equal laws. Whatever is wanting to the perfection of that balance, must be won by your own steady advancement in knowledge and virtue."* It had become a matter of grave necessity that from some influential source, such as that of the Useful Knowledge Society, should go forth a popular exposition of the cardinal points of political economy, as far as related to the Production of Wealth. The questions regarding its Distribution were reserved for another possible treatise; but at this time the complicated problem of that Distribution was proposed to be solved by pretended teachers of political economy, who were ranting in popular assemblies about the unequal allotment of riches, and proposing schemes for the "division of property," whose absurdity rendered them in some degree more dangerous at a time when many of the uneducated were moved rather by passion than by reason. But there was a class in the very lowest depths of ignorance, who were incapable of exercising their reasoning powers, either for good or for evil, upon any abstract question of the relations which held society together in mutual rights, duties, and interests. It was this class that

* Introduction, p. 9.

burnt Bristol on the 29th of October. "Capital and Labour" was ready for publication, when this event called for a conclusion of the treatise, in which I appealed to the great body of the working men of our country, each in his own circle, to put down that ignorant spirit which would make this temple of our once industrious and peaceful island a den of thieves. I thus wrote:

"When the ignorance of great masses of people is manifested by the light of a burning city, the records of that ignorance remain, in ruins which attest the hideous force of lawless *violence*. If the restraints of order are again set up, the ruins are cleared away; and, slowly, perhaps, but certainly, capital again ventures forth to repair the destruction which a contempt of its rights had produced. But let the spirit of violence long continue to exist in sullen contests with the laws, or in causeless jealousy of the possessors of property, and the spirit of *decay* is established. Then begins a silent but certain career of destruction, more sweeping and wide-spreading than all the havoc that civil war upon the most fearful scale has ever produced. Houses are no longer burnt, but they become untenanted; manufactories are no longer pulled down, but the sound of labour is heard no more within their walls; barns are no longer plundered to distribute their stores, but the fields are not sown which were wont to produce those stores; roads are no longer rendered impassable by hostile bands, but the traffic which once supported them has ceased; canals and rivers are not dry, but their waters are mantled over with weeds, for the work of communication is ended; harbours and docks are not washed

away by the sea, but the ships that once spread their sails for every corner of the earth lie idly within their bosoms, rotting 'sheer hulks,' abandoned to the destruction of the wind and the wave. In the meantime, while all this silent decay goes forward, and many a mouldering pile proclaims that the reign of justice is at an end, the people are continuing to perish from the face of the land. Famine and pestilence sweep away their prey by thousands; and the robber who walks abroad at noon-day selects his victims from the few who still struggle to hide a miserable remnant of former abundance. At length tranquillity is established—but it is the tranquillity of death. The destroyers have done their work;

They make a solitude, and call it peace.*

These, assuredly, would be the consequences of following the blind guides that would break down the empire of property. These advocates of your 'rights' would give you weeds instead of corn, skins instead of cloth, hollow trees instead of houses; and when you had gone back to the 'freedom' of savage life, and each of the scattered tenants of a country covered with the ruins of former wealth, could exclaim 'I am lord of the fowl and the brute,' these ministers of desolation would be able to sing their triumphal song of 'Labour defended against the claims of Capital,' amid the shriek of the jackal and the howl of the wolf." †

* Byron; who translates the passage literally from Tacitus.

† "Capital and Labour," p. 211. Edition, November, 1831. I should not have introduced this passage, which has especial reference to a condition of ignorance happily passed away, had it

The November of 1831 was a time of national dismay far more intense than any alarm that mob-violence could produce in a country of settled law and government. The Cholera-morbus had come to England. Cases terminating fatally had been reported at Sunderland, and on the 6th of November the people were kneeling in the churches to join in an authorised form of prayer—"Lord turn away from us that grievous calamity against which our only security is in Thy compassion." The contagion continued to spread throughout the country until, in the middle of February, 1832, cases of cholera were first observed in London. My family were then living at Hampstead, and I had frequently to go to London by the stage-coach. The conversation of the passengers was naturally of a melancholy cast, as indeed was that of all persons in public places or in private circles. The disputes and animosities arising out of the Reform Bill seemed to be forgotten. Instances daily presented themselves as the theme of sorrowful and serious reflection: how the Deputy of a certain Ward had been dining with his Company the day before and was dead in the next afternoon; how another citizen had been taken ill during a journey to the north, and had died at an inn with no relative or friend to receive his last wishes. Examples were given of the impartiality with which the great Leveller performed his work. Some thought that the establishment of a General Board of Health was a wise measure; others that it would be useless, for this new Plague must run its course. Many took

not been omitted in the volume founded upon the "Results of Machinery" and "Capital and Labour," entitled "Knowledge is Power."

that selfish view of their own safety which had been recommended by a periodical writer—to isolate themselves entirely from their neighbours, send away all superfluous servants, lay in a large store of provisions, and wait the visitation in gloomy security.

The great body of the British people were of a nobler temper. The rich did not shrink from their duty to the poor; the minister of religion did not hesitate to go fearlessly into the most filthy and pest-breeding districts, to utter the sacred words of hope and comfort; the physician, in this dread assault of a new and mysterious enemy, would rather have been the foremost of a forlorn hope, to encounter many "'scapes in the imminent deadly breach," where the victims were lying in heaps, than sit in his easy-chair to wait for the fees of frightened great ones. This visitation left the people sadder and wiser. They learnt the value of some of the great principles upon which the public health depended, and from that time there grew up a respect for sanitary regulations which had once been scouted as absurd and effeminate. In the series of the "Working Man's Companion" we did not neglect the occasion for combating popular errors of a social character, of inculcating the great private duties of cleanliness and temperance as regarded ourselves and our families, and of active benevolence and sympathy for our fellow-creatures. Dr. Conolly's little book on Cholera was a model of what a popular treatise on the preservation of health ought to be—not leading the delicate and the hypochondriacal to fancy they can prescribe for themselves in real illness; not undervaluing medicine, but showing how rarely is medicine necessary when the laws of nature are not habitually

violated. Of the fatal epidemic that had come amongst us this wise and kind physician spoke with confidence of its speedy removal, under God's providence, in a condition of society where the principles of cordial brotherhood should more prevail than the miserable suggestions of selfish exclusiveness; where in fact the safety of the upper classes depended upon the well-being of the lower. From the permanent blessing of that cholera-time—a blessing which it left behind instead of a curse—it grew, that the public health became one of the chief cares of the Government. A machinery was gradually organized, under which the effects of any pest can be removed or mitigated; and, what is of more importance, that the constantly present causes of disease should be grappled with—that typhus should be prevented as sedulously as cholera. Thus it has arisen, out of the calamity of 1831, that the whole body of the people have been elevated in their condition, and that the duration of life in England has reached an average which the Tables of Mortality of the last generation could not contemplate.

Parliament had re-assembled in the first week of December, and on the 12th Lord John Russell introduced a new bill for Parliamentary Reform. The first and second bills had been founded upon the census of 1821, in regulating the disfranchising clauses of boroughs with reference to the amount of the population. The results of the Census of 1831 were now to furnish a much safer guide. In addition to this essential change, the boundaries of many towns were carefully surveyed, and populous districts were included in boroughs, of which they had previously formed no portion. The superintendence of

this most important operation was confided to Lieutenant Thomas Drummond, of the Royal Engineers. He had been previously distinguished, when a very young man, by his beautiful invention of what is now known as the Drummond Light, which was of material use in the survey of Ireland, wherein he was employed. Lord Brougham, it is said, had a hard battle to fight in the Cabinet to carry his point of intrusting the responsibility of arranging the boundaries of boroughs to one unaccustomed to administrative functions. But Lieutenant Drummond's eminent abilities fully vindicated the perseverance of the Chancellor. I saw little during the passing of the Reform Bill of him who had won this confidence; but I had frequent communications with him when he became Lord Althorp's private secretary. No one who had business with him could fail to see the quickness of his perceptions, and the soundness of his judgment. Becoming Under-Secretary for Ireland, in 1835, he seemed, in his comprehensive plans for railways and for social improvements arising out of them, to bid fair to become the true Liberator of the sister island, who would build her happiness upon the cultivation of her great material resources. His death, in 1840, cut short this hope. The Reform Bill, thus improved in its machinery but rendered less effective, some thought, in its vital changes, was passed in the House of Commons, on the 19th of March. The bill was then passed in the Lords by a majority of nine; but it soon became manifest that its efficacy would be materially impaired as it went through the committee. Ministers were in a minority in that committee.

A crisis had come. The King refused to create

peers, and Lord Grey resigned. For one week the country was almost without a government. It was understood that the Duke of Wellington had failed in forming an administration which would adopt some comprehensive measure of Reform according to the wish of the King. In a week Lord Grey was again in power. But that interval was one of intense apprehension in London, and of more fears of popular outbreaks in the great provincial towns. When it was heard that a regiment of cavalry quartered at Birmingham had employed the Sunday in sharpening their swords, it was time for all good men to strive to avert the omen of a bloody revolution, instead of a peaceful Reform. The compromise by which this good was effected was such as the long training of Englishmen in political contests, which do not mean civil war, could alone have accomplished. The Reform Bill became the law of the land.

The Parliament was dissolved. A new Parliament was to be elected upon a broader basis. Large bodies of men throughout the country were to participate in the franchise, and for the first time to put on the rights and duties of electors. Everywhere there were candidates giving pledges. Everywhere electors new to the office had to learn the difference between representatives and delegates. Then was called forth all the mysterious machinery by which, in ancient cities and boroughs, elections had been wont to be carried. For myself, I had never taken any part in civic proceedings, but having met Sir John Key, the Lord Mayor, at a public dinner, he asked me when the company was separating, to go with him where I might witness a curious scene. At a tavern of no very elevated character, near the King's printing

office, we were ushered up-stairs. The door of a large room was thrown open; the waiter shouted out "The Lord Mayor;" there was a violent rapping of tables, but nothing could be seen, for a dense cloud of tobacco-smoke filled the whole space. Sir John Key was led to a place of dignity, and I was seated at a crowded table. As the smoke cleared away I saw a well-known tailor of Fleet Street elevated on a chair of state, with a silver chain round his neck. On his right hand sat Mr. Grote, the eminent banker, and now more eminent historian. Sir John Key was placed on the chairman's left hand. They were the Liberal candidates for the City. I was soon made acquainted with the nature of the honourable society into which I was thrown, for, with all due formalities, I was made a member of the Lumber Troop, in whose records could be traced, I was assured, their origin at the time of the Spanish Armada, as an integral portion of the Train Bands. This distinguished corps had not to go forth, as of old, against the fierce Rupert in his march upon London; their duty was to preserve such an organisation as would give them a voice potential in the representation of the City, which power I might be assured they would be ever ready, as at the present time, to exercise in the cause of freedom and of progress. It was not for me to express my belief that a little honest conviviality might have had as much effect in keeping them together, as any abstract devotion to the high principle by which the Londoners had of old maintained their liberties.

CHAPTER IX.

THE amended Reform Bill was passing through Committee in the House of Commons in February, 1832. There seemed to be little doubt that a Ministerial majority would be too strong in the Lower House to allow any re-actionary measure in the House of Lords to be successful. The new Government officials were settling themselves to the discharge of their administrative duties as if a long and quiet possession of place had been won. On the 13th of February, I received a note from Lord Auckland, the President of the Board of Trade, expressing his desire for a few minutes' conversation with me in the course of the afternoon. The interview was a very brief one, but its importance to me was not to be measured by its duration. The Cabinet Minister offered me a new office, which it was proposed to create at the Board of Trade, for digesting and arranging Parliamentary and other official documents for the information of members of the Government, and possibly for publication. This duty would have involved a regular attendance at Whitehall; the salary proposed was not a tempting one; but the offer seemed to open the way for a more ambitious career than that of a publisher. I requested time for deliberation. Having consulted a distinguished friend, he advised me to decline the

proposal, however flattering. Lord Auckland was surprised but not displeased at my rejection of his kind overture. He asked me to recommend some gentleman fitted for the post. There was one with whom I had recently formed an acquaintance, Mr. George Richardson Porter. He had written a paper on Life Assurance for the "Companion to the Almanac," and he was the author of a volume on the Silk Manufacture, published in Lardner's "Cyclopaedia." Mr. Porter received the appointment. The experiment was perfectly successful, and much of its success may be attributed to the ability and industry of him whom, so fortunately for the public good, I had recommended. Mr. Porter became the head of the statistical department of the Board of Trade, and in 1841 he was promoted to be one of the joint-secretaries of that board. Till the time of his lamented death in 1852, we were mutually attached friends, and he was one of the most valuable contributors to several of my publications.

Had I accepted the appointment of the Board of Trade in that February, it is probable that the whole course of my future life would have been changed. It was upon the cards that either I should have been sitting in an office at Whitehall from ten till four, cramming Ministers and Members of Parliament with statistical facts, or become identified with the most successful experiment in popular literature that England had seen. On March 31st, 1832, appeared the first number of "The Penny Magazine of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge."

In a debate in the House of Commons on the 22nd of May, 1834, on a motion for the Repeal of the

Stamp Duty on Newspapers, Mr. M. D. Hill, then member for Hull, in reply to Mr. Bulwer who moved the Repeal, thus described the origin of that work: "The Honourable Gentleman was pleased to characterize 'The Penny Magazine,' as affording a trumpery education to the people, because he says it deals in accounts of birds and insects, and such matters. I certainly was a little astonished to find my Honourable Friend scout an insight into the wonders of creation, as a trumpery affair. I should be sorry if his designation of that little work were correct, because the blame of its existence rests with myself, it being a project of my own; neither am I innocent of the course it has pursued; which from first to last has had, and still has, my hearty concurrence." The circumstances connected with this "project" were these. The town in that time of political excitement abounded with unstamped weekly publications, which in some degree came under the character of contraband newspapers, and were nearly all dangerous in principle and coarse in language. Mr. Hill and I were neighbours on Hampstead Heath, and as we walked to town on a morning of the second week in March, our talk was of these cheap and offensive publications. "Let us," he exclaimed, "see what something cheap and good can accomplish! Let us have a Penny Magazine!" "And what shall be its title?" said I. "THE PENNY MAGAZINE." We went at once to the Lord Chancellor. He cordially entered into the project. A committee of the Society was called, and such a publication was decided upon after some hesitation. There was a feeling amongst a few that a penny weekly sheet would be below the dignity of the

Society. One gentleman of the old Whig school, who had not originally belonged to the Committee, said again and again, "It is very awkward." Lord Brougham, however, was not accustomed to let awkward things stand much in his way. "The Penny Magazine" was decided upon. I undertook the risk of the publication, and was appointed to be its editor. The task was not a very easy one in the onset, for it was impossible to say, before the issue of a few numbers, whether the periodical sale would be twenty thousand or a hundred thousand, and whether a large demand would be a permanent one. It was therefore necessary to have a due regard to economy; and thus the attraction of expensive woodcuts could scarcely be ventured upon in the early days of the experiment. It was imperative also to proceed very cautiously in treading near the ill-defined line that separated the essayist from the newspaper writer. I have a letter before me from the Solicitor of Stamps, in which he says he has perused the specimen numbers (1 and 2) of the Magazine intended to be published by the Society, and that he sees nothing in these numbers that will render the publication liable to stamp duty. So I went confidently to my work. Perhaps no circumstance gave me greater encouragement than a letter from Francis Place, who knew more about the working classes, and had probably more influence with them, than any man in London. He describes his pleasure at seeing the prospectus. He begs me to let him have a quantity, which he would cause "to be usefully dispersed in the houses of call for journeymen, in workshops, and factories." Mr. Place united to his business of master-tailor, at Charing Cross, an intense devotion

to all the leading questions of politics that had been agitating the world since the time of the French Revolution. His collection of contemporary pamphlets was as extensive and complete as any man could have formed. I believe it was dispersed at his death, but it ought to have gone to the British Museum.

The excellent Dr. Arnold, some months after the "Penny Magazine" had appeared, described it as "all ramble-scramble." It was meant to be so—to touch rapidly and lightly upon many subjects. In the introductory article of the first number, I wrote: "Whatever tends to enlarge the range of observation, to add to the store of facts, to awaken the reason, and to lead the imagination into agreeable and innocent trains of thought, may assist in the establishment of a sincere and ardent desire for information; and in this point of view our little miscellany may prepare the way for the reception of more elaborate and precise knowledge, and be as the small optic-glass called *the finder*, which is placed by the side of a large telescope, to enable the observer to discover the star which is afterwards to be carefully examined by the more perfect instrument." I certainly never received any more striking testimony to the usefulness of the "ramble-scramble" in supplying a want to those who were striving to gain knowledge, but who were too poor to buy books, than the following passage in the "Autobiography of an Artisan," published in 1847. Christopher Thomson, the author of this interesting book, had settled as a house-painter at Edwinstowe, a village in Nottinghamshire:—"Squatting down here penniless, without a table or three-legged stool to furnish

a cottage with, it may easily be imagined that I had tough work of it. My great want was books; I was too poor to purchase expensive ones, and the 'cheap literature' was not then, as now, to be found in every out-o'-the-way nooking. However, Knight had unfurled his paper banners of free trade in letters. The 'Penny Magazine' was published—I borrowed the first volume, and determined to make an effort to possess myself with the second; accordingly, with January, 1833, I determined to discontinue the use of sugar in my tea, hoping that my family would not then feel the sacrifice necessary to buy the book. Since that period, I have expended large sums in books, some of them very costly ones, but I never had one so truly valuable as was the second volume of the 'Penny Magazine;' and I looked as anxiously for the issue of the monthly part as I did for the means of getting a living." This then was the service which the "Penny Magazine" was rendering, at the beginning of 1832, to the general cause of letters. I must associate with it "Chambers' Edinburgh Journal," a publication which was established a few weeks before mine. They were making readers. They were raising up a new class, and a much larger class than previously existed, to be the purchasers of books. They were planting the commerce of books upon broader foundations than those upon which it had been previously built. They were relegating the hole-and-corner literature of the days of exclusiveness to the rewards which the few could furnish; preparing the way for writers and booksellers to reap the abundant harvest when the "second rain" of knowledge should be descending "uninterrupted, unabated, unbounded; fertilizing some grounds and

overflowing others; changing the whole form of social life." *

The success of the "Penny Magazine" was an astonishment to most persons; I honestly confess it was a surprise to myself. It was not till the autumn that an attempt was made by the means of woodcuts to familiarise the people with great works of art. Then were presented to them engravings of a costly character, of such subjects as the Laocoon, the Apollo Belvedere, the Cartoons, and the great Cathedrals, British and Foreign. At the end of 1832, the "Penny Magazine" had reached a sale of 200,000 in weekly numbers and monthly parts. In the preface to the first volume, under the date of December the 18th, I thus wrote:—"It was considered by Edmund Burke, about forty years ago, that there were 80,000 *readers* in this country. In the present year it has been shown, by the sale of the 'Penny Magazine,' that there are 200,000 *purchasers* of one periodical work. It may be fairly calculated that the number of readers of that single work amounts to a million. If this incontestable evidence of the spread of the ability to read be most satisfactory, it is still more satisfactory to consider the species of reading which has had such an extensive and increasing popularity. In this work there has never been a single sentence that could inflame a vicious appetite; and not a paragraph that could minister to prejudices and superstitions which a few years since were common. There have been no excitements for the lovers of the marvellous—no tattle or abuse for the gratification of a diseased taste for personality, and, above all, no party politics."

* Scott. "Quentin Durward."

Although the "Penny Magazine" has a peculiar interest as a subject of literary history, it would be tedious if I were to attempt any minute notice of its contributors; but I may mention a few whose names occur to me as I turn over its early pages. There were members of the Committee who had a very just conception of what writing for the people meant. An article by Mr. Long, in the seventh number, on the value of a penny, is as clear and impressive as any statement from the pen of Cobbett. Mr. De Morgan wrote mathematical papers, in which the rationale of Fractions was exhibited, and the fallacy of such notions as squaring the circle was pointed out. Mr. Craik could be depended upon for enlightened as well as familiar expositions of the value of standard works, under the head of "The Library." Mr. Charles Macfarlane, of whom I shall have subsequently to speak, wrote most amusing accounts of his travelling experiences. There were authors not regularly engaged as contributors, who furnished valuable papers of marked ability. I had been in the habit of familiar intercourse with Allan Cunningham, even before the time when he wrote a paper in the "Quarterly Magazine." For the "Penny Magazine" he furnished a series of articles on "The Old English Ballads." I must not omit to mention the interesting relations of his South African experience, contributed by Thomas Pringle, one of the most amiable of men, with whom I had cultivated something higher than mere intimacy, when our friendly relations were cut short by his death in 1834. His biography of Sir Walter Scott, was called forth by the great novelist's lamented death on the 21st of September, 1832. It occupied an entire

number of the "Penny Magazine," and contains some valuable facts regarding Mr. Pringle's personal intimacy with Scott in 1819.

It may not be without an interest of no transient nature that I proceed to notice the beginnings of my intercourse with a man who left his mark upon his time, but who, when I first knew him, was not only under the check of "poverty's unconquerable bar," but was suffering under a great physical privation which appeared likely to disqualify him for any prosperous career in life. On the 18th of July, 1833, a short stout man, of about thirty years of age, presented himself to me at my place of business in Ludgate Street, to which premises, nearer the great hive of "*the* Trade" I had found it indispensable to remove. He tendered me a note from Mr. Coates, at the same time uttering some strange sounds, which could scarcely be called articulate. The few lines of introduction said that the bearer, Mr. Kitto, laboured under the misfortune of nearly absolute deafness, and that I must therefore communicate with him in writing. Mr. Coates enclosed me a letter from Mr. Woollcombe, the chairman of our local committee at Plymouth.* That letter is now before me, dated the 10th of July. This gentleman—who appears to have been peculiarly fitted, by his compassion for misfortune and his sympathy with talent, to rescue a pauper boy from the misery and degradation of a parish workhouse—pleaded the claims of the unknown John Kitto for literary employment in a way so interesting that I cannot hesitate to transcribe his words: "He is a native of this town, and became known to us by his misfortunes, as a lad of extraordinary capacity, though reduced by the vices of

his father to the condition of an inhabitant of our workhouse, and by an accident to an almost entire loss of the sense of hearing. He has subsequently been employed as a printer at Malta, by a religious society. But he is now just returned from a residence of some years at Bagdad; having embarked from England for Petersburg, and descended from thence through Russia to Moscow and other towns, entering Persia by the Desert; of that country he has acquired considerable information, which he is ready to communicate through your publications. He returned to England in June last. * * * His appearance is not prepossessing; his deafness is somewhat embarrassing; his talents are considerable, memory retentive, observation quick, and undivided as other men's are. His life is a series of extraordinary incidents, such as one is unwilling to acknowledge as being natural. I laugh and tell him the world is to be now indebted to two Devonshire men for the information it is to receive of distant countries. The one a blind man (Lieut. Holman), who is to publish what he has *seen* in his progress round the world. And (John Kitto) a deaf man, of what he has *heard* in Persia!"

I may have had something like an anticipation of this poor man's future eminence, judging from the unusual care with which I appear to have preserved some memoranda of our intercourse. I find a paper dated July the 21st, headed "Conversation with Mr. Kitto," of which the following is the substance of half a dozen pages of my notes. I asked him what European languages he knew. He said Italian, French perfectly, not German. He had proposed a new project, into which I thought the Society would

not at present enter; but, I should be glad to endeavour to arrange for his employment in the "Penny Magazine" and "Penny Cyclopædia." I asked if he could undertake to give a personal narrative of his travels in Persia. That would show what he could do, and he might be afterwards engaged on geographical articles for the "Cyclopædia," requiring more precise and systematic information. I then arranged with him to furnish a few articles of the nature I had mentioned, to be paid for at the rate of a guinea and a half a page. And so John Kitto, the future Biblical critic and commentator, went away perfectly happy, to produce the first number of "The Deaf Traveller," which appeared in "The Penny Magazine" of the 10th of August. A month of experiment had passed, and I then engaged Kitto at a regular salary, to work in my own room in Fleet Street. I could thus assist him whenever he had any question to propose, and to me he was no interruption, for our golden silence was rarely broken. He writes to a friend on the 18th of August, after he had been regularly employed for a week:—"I have little doubt that, through Mr. Knight's indulgence, I shall be able to keep this situation; the rather, as whatever spare time 'The Penny Magazine' does not require, is spent in perfecting my knowledge of French and Italian, and in acquiring the German. I do thank God for this relief from a state of great anxiety, in which I had begun to entertain the most melancholy view of the things before me, and saw possible consequences that I could not bear steadily to contemplate." Sitting, as he describes, "in Mr. Knight's room, with plenty of books about me, and more below," authors, printers,

country agents, and other men of business come and go to impart something to my private ear. They addressed me in whispers, when they saw a somewhat dwarfish man of sallow complexion, bright eyes, and lofty forehead, sitting close to my table at a separate desk, writing incessantly. To some he might have looked as a very suspicious person, who was placed there to note down their conversation. They soon became accustomed to this companionship, and learnt that he would be the most faithful depository of their spoken secrets, whether they were to roar as loud as Bully Bottom when he desired to play the lion, or spake "in a monstrous little voice," as when the same actor of all-work would have played "Thisby dear."

It appears from the correspondence of Dr. Arnold, that in the early stages of "The Penny Magazine" he felt a strong desire to see something of the religious spirit imparted to the works of the Useful Knowledge Society. His views upon the subject were so just and reasonable, that it is to me a matter of the deepest regret that I was never brought into direct communication with him in my editorial capacity. He says: "It does seem to me as forced and unnatural in us now to dismiss the principles of the Gospel and its great motives from our conversation,—as is done habitually, for example, in Miss Edgeworth's books,—as it is to fill our pages with Hebraisms, and to write and speak in the words and style of the Bible. The slightest touches of Christian principle and Christian hope in the Society's biographical and historical articles would be a sort of living salt to the whole; and would exhibit that union which I never will consent to think unattain-

able, between goodness and wisdom; between everything that is manly, sensible, and free, and everything that is pure and self-denying, and humble, and heavenly." * Dr. Arnold's strong desire was that of being able to co-operate with a body which he "believed might, with God's blessing, do more good of all kinds, political, intellectual, and spiritual, than any other society in existence." † He was anxious, he wrote, "to furnish them regularly with articles of the kind that I desire." For myself I can distinctly state that no expression of such a desire ever reached me; nor do I know that any communication to such an effect was ever formally put before the sub-committee for "The Penny Magazine." Dr. Arnold's nephew, Mr. John Ward, a solicitor in Bedford Row, to whom he writes in 1832, about "your Useful Knowledge Society Committee," was a member of that committee, and he contributed some very useful but rather dry "Statistical Notes" to "The Penny Magazine." These certainly were not calculated to carry out Dr. Arnold's views. But he himself has borne the most cordial testimony to one circumstance in the conduct of "The Penny Magazine," which shows that there was no settled purpose to exclude from that work "the slightest touches of Christian principle." I have said with reference to the religious articles of the "Plain Englishman," that Dr. Arnold wrote "in terms of somewhat extravagant commendation of a short article on Mirabeau which I had written." ‡ The letter was to Mr. Tooke, the treasurer of the

* "Life and Correspondence," vol. i. p. 274.

† *Ibid.*, p. 275.

‡ "Passages," vol. i. p. 243.

Society, and for the sake of clearing up this important question of principle, I must quote the passage to which I referred. "I cannot tell you how much I was delighted by the conclusion of an article on Mirabeau, in 'The Penny Magazine' of May 12. That article is exactly a specimen of what I wished to see, but done far better than I could do it. I never wanted articles on religious subjects half so much as articles on common subjects written with a decidedly Christian tone. History and Biography are far better vehicles of good, I think, than any direct comments on Scripture, or essays on Evidences." * The conclusion of the article to which Dr. Arnold refers, is as follows:—"The career of Mirabeau offers a few consolatory remarks to those who are gifted with no extraordinary faculties, either for good or for evil. Mirabeau swayed the destinies of millions, but he was never happy; Mirabeau had almost reached the pinnacle of human power, and yet he fell a victim to the same evil passions which degrade and ruin the lowest of mankind. He could never be really great, because he was never freed from the bondage of his own evil desires. The man who steadily pursues a consistent course of duty, which has for its object to do good to himself and to all around him, will be followed to the grave by a few humble and sincere mourners, and no record will remain except in the hearts of those who loved him, to tell of his earthly career. But that man may gladly leave to such as Mirabeau the music, the torches, and the cannon by which a nation proclaimed its loss; for assuredly he has felt that

* "Life and Correspondence," vol. i. p. 299.

inward consolation, and that sustaining hope throughout his life, which only the good can feel; he has fully enjoyed, in all its purity, the holy influence of 'the peace of God, which passeth all understanding.'"

I think that I may confidently say, that without attempting to impart to the "Penny Magazine" a distinctly religious character, I did not interpret in a too literal signification the original rule of the Society with reference to religion—that is, to abstain from publishing on that subject, "convinced that the numerous institutions already existing for the diffusion of religious knowledge in every shape will best advance that momentous end." * That I might have been encouraged to do more in the incidental manner advocated by Dr. Arnold I cannot doubt, had his approval of what he had read been communicated to me. When I first saw the opinion of this good and great man in his "Life," by the Rev. Arthur Stanley, published after his decease, I felt it was an injustice to myself on the part of the treasurer of the Society that this letter had been withheld from me.

After the "Penny Magazine" had been published during three years, I had the gratification of being able to offer a permanent situation to a gentleman for whom Dr. Arnold had a high esteem, to assist me in the conduct of that and other periodical works. Dr. Arnold in 1831 set up a weekly newspaper, "The Englishman's Register," which died a natural death in a few weeks. "Finding, however," says Mr. Stanley, "that some of his articles had been

* First Annual Report of the Society, 1828.

copied into the 'Sheffield Courant,' by its editor, Mr. Platt, he opened a communication with him in July, 1831, which he maintained ever afterwards, and commenced writing a series of letters in that paper, which, to the number of thirteen, were afterwards published separately, and constitute the best exposition of his views on the main causes of social distress in England." The friendship which the head master of Rugby manifested for John Clarke Platt was fully warranted by his admirable qualities. We worked together in the most perfect harmony for more than ten years, until he quitted London, again to undertake the editorship of a Sheffield Journal. His sound knowledge, especially on political and social subjects, his clear style and his calm judgment, excellently fitted him to be a contributor to the "Companion to the Almanac" and the "Penny Cyclopædia." There was another young man, whose imaginative turn of mind did not unfit him for dealing with matters of fact, historical or antiquarian, when he had passed through a course of training by diligent reading. John Saunders, having encountered much of the rough work, and sounded some of the perilous depths of journalism, has won a reputation as a novelist, at which no one can more truly rejoice than myself.

I cannot conclude this notice of the early history of the "Penny Magazine" without adverting to one who first gave me the benefit of his assistance, in the office generally known as that of a sub-editor, soon after I became connected with the Useful Knowledge Society. Alexander Ramsay has been for five-and-thirty years my friend and fellow-labourer. He has worked with me in every undertaking in which I

have been engaged, from the second volume of the "British Almanac and Companion" for 1830, to the last for 1864. He has brought to this long course of duty not only the ministerial services which belong to a reader of manuscripts and a corrector of the press, but taste, and knowledge, and readiness of resource, well adapted for original composition, in the accustomed progress and occasional exigencies of periodical works. I think it is creditable to both of us that in a long struggle by societies and individuals for the establishment of cheap and wholesome literature, we have been labouring side by side—that

> "In this glorious and well-foughten field,
> We kept together in our chivalry!"

Having lingered, perhaps too long, around details that may be more interesting to myself than to others, I return to the point of time which I quitted at the close of the last chapter.

In September, 1832, when the whole country was alive with the "note of preparation" for elections to the Reformed Parliament, Mr. Hill was at Hull, ambitious of representing the fine old town which nearly two centuries before had Andrew Marvell for its member. He wrote to me to come down for a brief holiday, and to endeavour to form at Hull a Local Committee of our Society. The chief port of the Humber was not then so accessible as by the present railway journey of five hours. Leaving London by the night mail, I looked out as the morning dawned upon the beautiful western front of Peterborough, and had a somewhat dreary ride of nine hours in addition, until I reached the shore from which I was to cross to Hull in a ferry-boat.

I was in Hull, as I find recorded in a letter home, at ten minutes to four, and at a quarter past found myself seated in a room with two hundred people, of whom I knew not a face but Hill's. I was somewhat amazed at his extraordinary power as a speaker over a mixed audience, and although I was not myself "quite unused to public speaking," I was a little frightened when I had an opportunity of testifying to his zeal in the cause of education. That merit, I think, was as effectual a guarantee for his success as his political opinions—somewhat more advanced than those of the Whigs-proper, but avoiding many of the excesses of the extreme Radicals. I judged that my friend's return as one of the members for Hull was perfectly certain, and the event proved that I was right. I stayed here three days, enjoying a most hospitable reception, in the society of merchants not less intellectual and refined than those of Liverpool. In the dwellings and household arrangements of the humbler classes of that busy port, there was an appearance of comfort and of regard for health which Liverpool did not exhibit.

My friend was about to proceed to Westmorland on a visit to Lord Brougham. I was desirous of a week's ramble in the Lake District, although it might be a solitary one; for my life in the South, when I was rarely free to make holiday tours, had never allowed me to become familiar with mountain scenery. We went on together through Beverley and York to Penrith. While at breakfast on the morning after our arrival, there came a letter from the Chancellor to Mr. Hill, insisting that I should not go on to Keswick, as I had proposed, but become his guest. I spent a week with him of no common

pleasure, of which I may note down a few remembrances without trespassing upon that sanctity of the family life which has too often been violated in "Pencillings" and other ministrations to a depraved curiosity.

There is perhaps no more beautiful exhibition of what has been called the delight of spontaneous existence than the daily life of a great statesman escaped from cabinets and courts, from rivalries and importunities, from scenes of perpetual turmoil and excitement, to sit down at peace in his own fields, like Chatham at Hayes, or Burke at Beaconsfield, or Fox at St. Ann's Hill. I had been at Brougham Hall five days, when I wrote to my wife to convey some idea of that week of enjoyment—of relaxation mingled with serious employment—of anecdotical gossip and grave discussion. My sober reminiscences of that time are perfectly in unison with the warm expressions of the moment:—"Our course of life is this—We rise at seven. Hill and I walk, if it is fine, for an hour. Then come the letters and papers. At a quarter to ten we breakfast. At the head of the table sits the Chancellor's mother—the most interesting old lady I ever saw in my life. Heavens, what he must owe to the care of that mother! Mr. William Brougham is of the party. At eleven we go up to the library—the Chancellor and we two—and there we discuss some point of national importance, with all sorts of documents before us, for three or four hours. We then start off for a drive amongst the Lakes—still we three—where the Chancellor delights to point out the beauties of the scenery, or tell us some local anecdote—ever and anon coming back to our morning's labours upon Education, Poor Laws, Taxes, Tithes, &c. &c. At

half-past six or seven we dine—have a cheerful and animated talk for two or three hours—then the drawing-room and tea—and bed at eleven. I am quite sure this week will have a lasting effect upon my temper and modes of thought. It is impossible to be in company with Lord Brougham for a short time, and not feel wiser;—but to meet him in his daily life—to witness his regulated industry, to enjoy his constant good humour, to partake his high hopes for the improvement of his fellow creatures, and to have one's own powers constantly called out by his wonderful talents, without being in the slightest degree under constraint—all this constitutes a rare enjoyment, and furnishes a powerful incentive to deserve the friendship of such a man."

We had not only drives amongst the Lakes but long walks. How vividly some of the incidents of these rambles come before me! We descend from the Hall to the ruins of Brougham Castle, and I think of the Shepherd Lord, and of the Song that was sung at the feast when he was restored to the honours of his ancestors:—

"Love had he found in huts where poor men lie."

He by whose side I was walking was intent upon raising "poor men" out of the degradations of poverty by wise employment of the funds that belonged to the helpless, and not to the idle. The Chancellor took an especial interest in the inquiries that were then proceeding under a Royal Commission as to the administration and operation of the Poor-Laws. Evening after evening would his Dispatch-box bring down some Report of the Assistant Commissioners. He occasionally gave me the task

of looking over these voluminous papers, and marking passages for his more careful perusal. This was some of the *regular morning* employment. But on one bright forenoon we sallied forth for a whole holiday. Our course was by the side of the little river under the high grounds of Lowther Castle. We came to the turnpike-gate. It suggested an anecdote which tells how much stronger is the sympathy of genius than the antagonism of party. After that Session of 1822, in which Mr. Canning and Mr. Brougham had a painful difference of a personal nature in the House of Commons, they suddenly met here, riding alone in opposite directions. This gate was closed. They sat for a moment steadily looking at each other, then each burst into a laugh, and shook hands in parting. I doubt not that both were the happier for this meeting. That fine morning brought on a wet noon. We found refuge in a dalesman's cottage; and, drying our coats over his peat fire, had a cheerful talk of an hour or two—but generally coming back to the one subject of Education in its various forms. The Diffusion of Useful Knowledge was of course a leading topic. The "Penny Cyclopædia" had been announced; and we had to settle principles and form plans for its conduct. We had to dwell also on the subject then constantly presenting itself to the Chancellor's official mind—that of Education in relation to Pauperism. The conversations which arose upon the great question of the amendment of the Poor Laws were to me as stores of knowledge, when I had practically to deal with subjects of Local Administration.

I must not linger around the remembrances of this interesting visit. We parted from our friendly host on a

Monday morning, and travelled by chaise to Keswick. Here we stayed several days, making excursions to Buttermere; climbing Skiddaw; boating on Derwent-water; and not reaching Liverpool till Thursday night. As I read a letter which I then wrote home, I feel that I have often foolishly proposed to execute literary tasks, when travelling with the one true object—that of repose and change of scene. It is quite enough to give the mind renewed powers, in filling it with new associations of beauty and grandeur whether of Nature or of Art. "I am writing," I said, "upon some large paper I bought at Keswick to complete an article which I am trying to accomplish for the 'Journal of Education,' but it is impossible. The glorious magnificence of the mountains got such possession of my mind that I could think, and even dream, of nothing else. I do not wonder that men of lively imaginations are content to give up all worldly prospects for a bare maintenance amidst such scenes. I could almost be such an enthusiast myself, with six children, at forty."

CHAPTER X.

"THE success of the 'Penny Magazine' has induced the Committee to undertake the publication of a 'Penny Cyclopædia,' in Numbers and Monthly Parts. A work of such magnitude and novelty requires all the assistance which can be afforded it by the Members of the Society, both in London and in the Country, in order to give it publicity and circulation." Such was the announcement of their greatest undertaking in the annual address of the Useful Knowledge Society, dated June 30, 1832. A specimen of the projected "Penny Cyclopædia" had been printed by Mr. Clowes on the previous 2nd of June. This fact was certified by him after a surreptitious "Penny Cyclopædia" had been advertised in the daily papers of the 16th of August "as now ready." This had been met on the 17th by an advertisement from the Committee, cautioning the public against an attempt to impose upon them. The career of this pretender was terminated before the issue of the first number of the real "Penny Cyclopædia," on the 2nd of January, 1833.

In characterizing their undertaking as "a work of such magnitude and novelty," the Committee appear to have looked at its magnitude, rather with reference to the universal range of the proposed information, than to the contemplated limits in point of size. I

have stated that the "Penny Cyclopædia" was projected by me "to form a moderate-sized book of eight volumes."* The novelty was not to consist in producing a Cyclopædia under one alphabetical arrangement, but in its issue in weekly sheets, each of which was to be sold at a penny. But there was another novelty which would very soon be discovered by the educated portion of the public, upon a comparison of this work with existing Cyclopædias. It was not an affair of scissors and paste. It was not a hash from German and French sources. Its writers had not "been at a great feast of languages and stolen the scraps." Every article was to be original; to be furnished by various men, each the best that could be found in special departments of knowledge. The essential difficulty of making the contributions at once brief and complete was discovered when the experiment came to be tried for a few months. It was impossible, moreover, to offer an adequate remuneration to a competent scholar or man of science, when it was said to him—You must give us the very cream of your knowledge; you must pour out the fullest information in the most condensed form of words; your articles must nevertheless be readable and perfectly intelligible to the popular mind; and yet, under these difficult conditions, you must be paid at a certain rate per page. This "solatium," not low as compared with reviews and magazine articles in reference to the mere number of words, was very low if the merit of the Cyclopædia was to consist in extreme compression, whilst the Review and the Magazine conductors would allow of

* Companion to the Almanac, 1858, p. 15.

any amount of expansion not altogether extravagant. The plan would never work. It would pay the gardener to grow dwarf pear trees and peach trees, but it would not pay the writer to produce dwarfed articles that, like the rarities of the hot-house and conservatory, should be perfect in form, if not in size, bear good fruit, and not die very prematurely. A very clever and accomplished author, Mr. Samuel Phillips, thus described the issue of this experiment: "When the Cyclopædia was started, the public were invited to pay their penny a week, and to seize the opportunity of securing, not only a valuable, but also an incomparably *cheap* publication. 'Useful knowledge' was to be 'diffused' by a society appointed for the express purpose, but it was not to be 'diffusive.' It was to be poured abroad, but in such a form as should instruct, not weary or perplex the recipient. If we remember rightly, eight good compact volumes were to contain the substantial food for which the working mind was pining. Before one volume, however, was completed, the Committee thought it expedient to hint that it must 'be observed that the plan of the *Cyclopædia* had been rather enlarged.' After a year the plan had enlarged so much that the rate of issue was doubled. It was no longer a penny a week, but twopence. After three years it was quadrupled—fourpence a-week instead of twopence. Had the original plan of a penny weekly issue been persevered in, it would have taken exactly thirty-seven years to complete the business." *

The extension of the quantity of the Cyclopædia

* "Times," Oct. 12, 1854.

was no doubt unavoidable under the superintendence of the Society, but it destroyed its commercial value. Had it been a careful compilation, instead of an original work furnished by nearly two hundred contributors, it would have been to me a fortune. In that case, its preparation being confined to a few persons, its proposed limits could have been steadily adhered to. I have recorded,—without inferring that any blame was in the least degree to be attached to those who were responsible for its conduct—what was the commercial result of this enterprise. "The Committee had the honour of the work, in its extended form, but without incurring any of the risk, or contributing one shilling to the cost, the literary expenditure alone having reached nearly 40,000*l.* Upon the completion of the Cyclopædia, the balance upon the outlay above the receipts was 30,788*l.*" * The regular decrease in the sale was very marked. While it continued to be published upon its original plan of one number weekly, the sale was 75,000. The instant there was an issue of two numbers a week it fell to 55,000, and at the end of its second year it had fallen to 44,000. When the twopence a week became fourpence, the rate of diminution became still more rapid. The sale of the first year was double that of the fourth year. The sale of the fourth year doubled that of the eighth year. It then found its level, and became steady to the end—the 55,000 of the latter months of 1833 having been reduced to 20,000 at the close of 1843. The Committee of the Society, when the original project had been departed from, and they saw that the under-

* Companion to the Almanac, 1858, p. 15.

taking had become to me a burden and a loss, passed a resolution that no rent be paid upon the first 110,000 copies of each number of the "Penny Cyclopædia." Rent was then to commence; and to continue till the work had reached a sale of 200,000, when the Society would no longer ask for a remuneration for its superintendence. No doubt I was grateful for this sanguine anticipation of a good time coming, but it is scarcely prudent or satisfactory for a commercial man to postpone his profits *ad Calendas Graecas.* The chronic loss for eleven years, which was induced by the Cyclopædia, and which fell wholly upon me, absorbed every other source of profit in my extensive business, leaving me little beyond a bare maintenance, without the hope of laying by for the future.

There was a very serious interruption to the sale of the Cyclopædia after it had existed about six months; which may be worth recording, as exhibiting the evils of unrepealed laws passed in former states of society and under different circumstances. I find this record in the Minutes of the Committee of the 12th of June, 1833: "Mr. Knight laid on the table a letter from Mr. Drake, of Birmingham, dated the 10th instant, which stated, that informations had been filed, and convictions obtained, under the 27th clause of the 39th George III., chap. 79, against booksellers in that town, for selling a publication whereof the printer's name did not appear on the first and last pages; and that in consequence many booksellers were fearful of selling the 'Penny Magazine' and 'Cyclopædia.'" Copies of these and other letters received on this subject were transmitted to Mr. Spring Rice, with whom I had an interview. The

result was that, although a law might eventually be passed to remedy the oppression of these *qui tam* informations, the statute of the 39th George III. could not at once be repealed. I had no remedy but to call in the whole of the stock in the hands of many wholesale agents scattered through the country, who had to go through the same process with those they had supplied. The law was subsequently altered in its effect by the Government deciding that it should be left to the discretion of the Attorney-General to prosecute publishers in all cases where the statute was not strictly adhered to.

Mr. Phillips has said in his article on the "Penny Cyclopædia"—"Mr. Knight, the publisher and prime mover of the undertaking, proudly congratulated himself at its close upon having achieved a great literary triumph; he had also, as was usual in his pæans, to mingle in his song the melancholy note of one suffering under the consciousness of great commercial loss." The melancholy note which was out of harmony with my pæans was almost invariably connected with the pressure of the paper duty upon all works of large circulation and low price. With the high duty of threepence in the pound, it required a steadfast resolution on my part not to be beaten by excessive taxation, and an equal hope that the duty might be abolished or reduced, to prevent me throwing up the Cyclopædia in despair. In 1836 the duty was reduced to three halfpence in the pound. This was a relief; but it was not commensurate with the constant falling sale to which I have adverted. I gladly suspend "the melancholy note" and turn to a much more interesting subject—the

reminiscence of some of the most valued contributors to the Cyclopædia, whose services conferred upon it a reputation which has survived during all the varied changes of literature and science that we have seen, and which is capable of a constant renewal of its pristine vigour, such as has been accomplished in "The English Cyclopædia."

The author of "The Rehearsal" has made merry with the notion of "two kings of Brentford sitting on one throne, smelling to one nosegay." If Mr. Long and myself had persevered for more than a few months in the attempt to divide the editorial duties connected with the "Penny Cyclopædia" we might possibly have been presented to the world in this ludicrous attitude. As it was, I very soon most gladly resigned the reins into the hands of one who managed his team with consummate skill during many years. For such a work as the Cyclopædia a thoroughly competent Editor was indispensable. He must combine the moral qualities of unwearied industry and undeviating punctuality, with the firmness which is best supported by courtesy and kindness. I have heard that a man of letters who was rather raw, laid down as a maxim for his editorial guidance that he must be polite to his contributors, but by no means familiar. Mr. Long's contributors gathered round him as friends. On his intellectual qualities it is unnecessary for me to dilate. Lord Brougham, in his Address to the Association for the Promotion of Social Science in 1857, referred to the operations of the Committees of the Useful Knowledge Society as an example of "the beneficial effects of united action." In the "Companion to the Almanac" for 1858, I noticed, as I

felt it my duty to do, the somewhat exaggerated estimate which the Chairman of the Society had formed of the results of this *united* action, without making the slightest reference to *individual* actions. Speaking more especially of Mr. Long's labours as Editor of the Cyclopædia, and incidentally alluding to my own in connection with the "Penny Magazine" and other works, I said—"That the Society presented many advantages as a base of operations is unquestionable. It had the prestige of great names connected with it. Its members were of high intelligence and various learning; they were industrious; and, what was of equal importance, they confided in their editors. Had this confidence not existed, the periodical works could not have gone on a single month. They would have broken down under a divided responsibility, and have been suffocated in the red-tapeism of what Lord Brougham described as 'a vigilant superintendence over the style, so that errors in composition and offences against correct, and even severe, taste were sure to be corrected,'—always provided that the editors had any reliance upon the correct, and even severe, taste of the correctors. That 'the great number of our members' produced even these minor results is a figure of speech. There were a few working members, as there are in every association, who were valuable referees; but that the Society, as a body, was the moving power which enabled it to publish for twenty years 'with unbroken regularity,' we humbly beg to say is a continuance of a delusion which was not entertained by those members who were content to aid in doing what they thought a work of public utility, without attempting to shut

their eyes to what had been accomplished, during many years, by editorial responsibility."

In the sixth chapter, I have incidentally mentioned several of the earlier members of the Useful Knowledge Committee as contributors to the Cyclopædia. Upon looking over the general list of the contributors to this work during the many years of its publication, I cannot but regard it as most fortunate that a rule, which was attempted to be established in the first stages of the Society, soon came to be held as perfectly impracticable. This rule, to which Lord Brougham gave the name of the Self-denying Ordinance, was in effect that no member of the Committee should be paid for his writings. It was perhaps desirable that such a rule should have existed at the origin of the Society, when it was considered that public subscriptions would be necessary for its maintenance. But when it was found that during five years this source of revenue had only yielded to the Society a clear annual sum of 125*l.*, and that its publications might be carried on upon the commercial principle alone, and afford a profit partly to the Society and partly to its publishers, it would have been the extreme of false delicacy to deny to the Editor of the Cyclopædia, especially, the services of some of the best contributors he could anywhere find. The time was past when the highest in rank, as well as the most eminent in literature or science, would think it a degradation to be paid for their writings.* And thus, whether members of our Committee or otherwise, every writer in the Cyclopædia was paid at a fixed rate, whose aggregate at the end of the work had amounted to the large sum I have previously

stated. Standing, therefore, upon the same principle as regulated the pecuniary arrangements with other contributors—the only principle upon which the relations of author and publisher can be harmoniously maintained—I shall not attempt to separate the two classes in referring with necessary brevity to the chief supporters of this undertaking in the character of writers.

First in importance of the great departments of the "Cyclopædia," may be reckoned that of mathematical and physical science. Upon Professor De Morgan rested its heaviest labours. It was essential that one mind should have the almost undivided charge of Mathematics, considering that, the order of the articles being alphabetical, the relation of one portion of a subject to the other had constantly to be regarded so as to render the whole series of articles complete and harmonious. Thus this collection of mathematical papers, when duly arranged by their author according to his own views, have been constantly referred to in his classes at University College. Astronomy necessarily formed a portion of this division, and to Professor De Morgan are due the accuracy and completeness of the general articles on this subject. There were special papers on this branch of science by other contributors. In speaking of the series on astronomical instruments, by the Rev. Richard Sheepshanks (who became a member of the committee soon after the first publication of the Cyclopædia), I cannot forbear to express the admiration I always felt for this distinguished man. There was a breadth in his understanding which carried him beyond the range of the minute and laborious scientific opera-

tions to which he devoted the greater part of his time. He was a liberal thinker in political matters, although never publicly meddling with the great questions whose triumphs he rejoiced to behold. His conversation on matters of history and literature always presented the evidence of sound thought and rich learning. He was ready to assist in any well-considered project of utility with a self-devotion quite untainted by any desire of profit or distinction. The same generous spirit seems to have been a family inheritance, for it was his brother John, who, in 1856, presented to the nation his noble collection of pictures by British artists.

Lord Brougham used to point with a just pride to the one contribution of the Astronomer-Royal to the "Penny Cyclopædia," as a notable example of the value of popular literature in the eyes of one of the most eminent scientific men of his day. Mr. Airy's paper on Gravitation is indeed a masterpiece of lucid exposition without the employment of mathematical formulæ. Printed in a separate shape it was long used as a text-book at Cambridge, and has been reprinted (without alteration, as the author desired) in the "English Cyclopædia." There are some valuable papers on Physics, commencing with the letter D, by Robert Murphy, one of those unfortunate men whose remarkable powers of mind have been neutralised by the want of those moral qualities which would have preserved them from a course of vicious indulgence. His early career presents one of the most striking examples of self-education on record. He was born in 1806, the son of a parish clerk and shoemaker, at Mallow, in Ireland. At eleven years of age, while learning his father's trade,

he was run over by a cart, and whilst lying for twelve months on his bed, with a fractured thigh-bone, was supplied by his friends with books. A Cork Almanac, which was amongst these, contained some mathematical problems that excited his curiosity. He desired to know more of the subject so attractive to him, and Euclid was put into his hands. In course of time the lame boy, who used to write answers to mathematical problems which appeared in newspapers, obtained patrons who endeavoured to take him out of his intended life of mechanical employment. They failed in procuring his admission as a student of Trinity College, Dublin, through his deficiency in classical acquirements, although he had received much valuable assistance in his favourite pursuit from a schoolmaster at Mallow. At length, when he had reached the age of nineteen, some of his papers were placed in the hands of Professor Woodhouse, of Cambridge, who, having at first reluctantly looked at them, was suddenly struck by such evidences of original talent, that he entered the name of Robert Murphy on the boards of Caius College. With the exception of a small outfit from his friends in Ireland, his expenses at Cambridge were defrayed by the College in addition to the receipts of his scholarship. In 1829, he was elected a Fellow of Caius. In 1832, although he had taken Deacon's orders, he fell into dissipated habits, and his fellowship was sequestrated for debt. His frailties were treated with indulgence by the college authorities, and it seemed probable that he would regain his position in the University He came, however, to London in 1836, to look for employment as a teacher and a writer; began the

articles on Physics in the Cyclopædia, and subsequenly wrote a treatise on Algebraic Equations for the Society. Before his death, in March, 1843, of a pulmonary disease, "the necessity of struggling for a livelihood made it impossible for him to give his undivided attention to researches which, above all others, demand both peace of mind and undisturbed leisure." * Amongst the contributors in the general department of Physics, I must add the name of Mr. Narrien, Professor of Mathematics in the Royal Military College at Sandhurst. He was also our chief authority in military science. Although the vast changes in the art of war, during the last twenty years, have impaired the practical value of many of his articles, they formed a solid foundation of principles, on which to build a view of the modern improvements which have set all nations upon devising the most efficient means of attack and defence. Gunnery and fortification, under the modern principle, may probably have the consequence of diminishing the amount of bloodshed, in the same way as the invention of gunpowder put an end to such battlefields of unscientific carnage as that of Agincourt.

The general articles on Physics in the "Penny Cyclopædia"—in which, as in all other departments, occasion was invariably taken in the latter portion of the alphabet to make mention of more recent improvements and discoveries—present the evidence of the truth, expressed in a few words by Dr. Arnott, "that human knowledge and art have been progressive in the world, and are now advancing with accelerated speed." † Thus, although the papers on

* Supplement to "Penny Cyclopædia."

† "Elements of Physics," 1864. Introduction, p. vii.

Electricity and Magnetism dealt with a full knowledge of the theories existing some twenty years ago, much that was then new has now become almost obsolete, except in connection with the history of science. But more strikingly is this principle exemplified in the large series of articles on Chemistry and Mineralogy, which were almost wholly confided to Richard Phillips. No one more thoroughly or more practically acquainted with the science, and more capable of furnishing lucid expositions, could have been found. He was held in the highest respect by the chemists of his day, as may be judged from the fact that when the Chemical Society of London was founded, in 1841, the distinction was offered to him of becoming its first president. He was then working at his articles in the "Penny Cyclopædia," as he had worked from its commencement. I had many opportunities of familiar intercourse with this eminent man, whose simplicity of character and manner seem to have retained something of the plainness and sincerity of that school of pharmaceutical chemistry in which he was educated —the establishment in Plough Court of William Allen, the Quaker. Mr. Phillips died in his seventy-third year, in 1851, being then the curator and chemist of the Museum of Practical Geology. In 1852, Dr. Daubeny, president of the Chemical Society, in his annual address described Mr. Phillips (who in 1850 had been his predecessor in that office) as being during the latter part of his life, "a connecting link between the chemists of the last generation and of the present, having been the contemporary of Davy and Wollaston no less than of Faraday and Graham." He was further described as "one of the

last of that distinguished band of philosophers who, before chemical science had so enlarged its boundaries, as to include within its domain, and to comprehend within the operation of its laws, the products of animal and vegetable life, occupied themselves almost exclusively in the investigation of the combinations of which mineral bodies are susceptible." But not only had the domain of chemistry been thus greatly enlarged, but its very language has been changed. Symbols now convey to the mind of the student facts which previously required to be expressed in many words. Thus, valuable as the articles of Mr. Phillips were, they demanded careful remodelling and large additions for the "English Cyclopædia." In two more decades, perhaps even in one, the same process will again have to be gone through, if that book is to preserve its reputation, and not stereotype what has become obsolete and inapplicable to new conditions of science or social life.

I turn to the applications of science to the arts. First in importance in the past and in the present state of civilisation is Agriculture. I have a note before me, dated February 25th, 1833, from the Rev. William Lewis Rham, whom I had slightly known during my Windsor experience as the Vicar of Winkfield, in Berkshire. He therein proposes, upon the suggestion of his friend, Mr. Jardine, to write for the "Penny Cyclopædia," "as affording a considerable variety of subjects, and especially those connected with agriculture, to which I have paid some attention, and in which I have some practical experience." This proposition was gladly closed with; for it was not easy then to find one of "practical experience" in agriculture who had the power of expressing his

ideas in a style which should unite brevity with clearness, and by its popular qualities turn aside the country gentleman and the cultivator from their ordinary contempt of "book-farming." Mr. Rham immediately commenced that series of papers in the "Penny Cyclopædia," which were subsequently collected in a volume entitled "The Dictionary of the Farm." He wrote the first of these articles at the beginning of 1833. He wrote the last of the series, "Yorkshire Husbandry," in 1843, only a few weeks before his death. During these eleven years of occasional intercourse, I saw in Mr. Rham one of the most amiable and benevolent of men. I visited him in his parish, where he discharged his pastoral duties with exemplary care. But he did more than the ordinary duties of his position. The Winkfield School of Industry, under his guidance, became a model for all similar institutions in country parishes. There were then few examples in England of what Fellenberg was doing at Hofwyl. Mr. Rham was not opposed, even during a period of political excitement, as Fellenberg was opposed in 1833. But Mr. Rham did not receive in his plans for education any great sympathy from his own class. He farmed his glebe at Winkfield. It was here that he tried those experiments in scientific agriculture which were compatible with the cultivation of a limited number of acres, before the era of those mechanical improvements which have now rendered the farmer a manufacturer. But whatever could be attained by diligent observation at home and in foreign countries, and by the study of foreign writers on scientific husbandry, was employed as far as possible in the routine of Mr. Rham's own farm. Previous to writing the treatise

on Flemish Husbandry for the "Farmer's Series" of the Useful Knowledge Society, he walked from farm to farm in Flanders during many weeks, enjoying the rough hospitality of a simple people, and, speaking their language with facility, made himself agreeable to them by the variety and extent of the knowledge which he imparted. As he returned from this tour, I met him on board a steamer, in which I had taken my passage from Antwerp; and I have a vivid recollection of the charm of his conversation, and the kindness of his attentions when I was suffering from an accident which had occurred during a journey of which I shall hereafter have occasion to speak.

Having mentioned Fellenberg's establishment at Hofwyl, I may assume that Mr. Rham, whose mother was a Swiss, was well acquainted with the successful experiments in the education of the poor which had been carried on in the Canton of Berne for thirty-two years, when the "Penny Cyclopædia" was first published. Mr. Brougham, in his evidence before the Education Committee in 1818, gave a most interesting account of Fellenberg's School for the Poor. In 1833 Lord Brougham wrote me a letter which appears so strikingly characteristic of his enthusiasm in the cause of education that I may venture to give a few extracts. Its object was to put me into communication with Mr. Duppa, of Hollingbourne House, Maidstone, who had recently returned from a visit to Hofwyl. "The bigots and tyrants," says Lord Brougham, "have been prevailing so far as to get up an attack on Mr. Fellenberg's system (and on all sound systems of education), and they have enlisted so much of the Swiss press on

their side that he considers they can only be saved by help from our own press. Mr. Fellenberg is desirous above all that the facts should be made known, and he has appealed to me. I feel so much interested in it that nothing but the inconvenience of putting the Great Seal in commission prevents me from hastening to his assistance, because if I saw with my own eyes what is doing, I know I could speedily discomfit this vile conspiracy—which eighteen years ago nearly nipt his plan in the bud. * * * * My belief is clear that an effort made now, and in time, by the press, as far as the Society has access to it, would be decisive in *heading back* Mr. Fellenberg's enemies—who are chiefly the aristocratic faction in Berne, and who never will forgive him, because, being himself a patrician, he has chosen to lead the life of a schoolmaster for the good of mankind." In concluding, Lord Brougham called upon me to do something upon this subject for the "Penny Magazine," during *the prorogation* of the Society to which Mr. Fellenberg had appealed. Mr. Duppa sent me an interesting account of his visit for the "Magazine," and at the same period wrote a full account of Hofwyl in the "Journal of Education."

The contributions of Mr. Rham to the "Penny Cyclopædia," furnished a complete view of the theory and practice of agriculture up to the time of his death in 1843. But we were then within only a year or two of the greatest social change of the present generation—the entire relinquishment of the system of Protection for the home cultivator. Out of the removal of restrictions upon the importation of foreign corn and foreign cattle, have sprung up new processes, new applications of mechanical power,

new substitutions of skilled labour for unskilled, which have lifted the whole course of farming operations out of the routine of centuries into a systematic study of chemistry, of meteorology, of geology, and—of what was probably most wanting in the small acquirements of the old farmer—of Political Economy. The tentative legislation, by which the era of Free Trade in corn was heralded, filled most agriculturists with a shivering which preceded the great shock. A few of the wiser saw what was coming, and called in Science for the more efficient working of their Capital. Some twenty years ago I was travelling in a railway carriage from Hastings to Brighton, when an ancient gentleman exclaimed, "The young 'uns will all be ruined with these new-fangled inventions; my family have owned a farm in Sussex ever since the time of William the Conqueror, and whilst I live I will work the land as my father worked it." I presumed to ask him how it was that he rode in a railway carriage, whilst his father and grandfather so often found their lumbering conveyances stuck in the Sussex ruts as they travelled to market? The patriarch was angry, but he could not deny that he had surrendered his free-will to a base novelty.

When the "Penny Cyclopædia" was completed, early in 1844, we were only in the infancy of that vast change in the intercourse of the world which has been effected by railways. The "Cyclopædia," as well as the "Companion to the Almanac," kept up a systematic view of the progress of this new method of communication, upon the ultimate benefits of which many still looked with doubt, and some with a sort of horror at the innovation which seemed likely to alter many of our social relations. Especially

strong was the alarm, when, in 1844, the railway companies were required to run what is now called a Parliamentary train, at the rate of a penny a mile. It was as if the world were coming to an end, when farm servants might, at a small cost, go daily to their work out of the bounds of their own parish. When the advantages of this new legislation were first visible in the sight of a smock-frock labourer whistling in the train, I wrote: "The Railway has to raise the condition of all those who for centuries have lived remote from the nourishing influences of our growing civilisation. Rustic innocence and rustic happiness have been found out to be dreams of an age that never existed. The seats of ignorance are in the villages where never mail-horn has been heard. There live the bondmen, as much bound to the soil as the villains of the fourteenth century—bondmen without the sustenance of bondage. The railway and the steamboat, by opening markets, by saving cost of transit, assist the accumulation of agricultural capital. That capital cannot be better employed than in the calling forth of skilled labour. Let labour circulate, and it must become skilled. Pen it up in hamlets, and it continues the mechanical, hopeless, dangerous thing it is now in its uncultivated state."*

At the period of the completion of the "Cyclopædia," we were very close upon the general application of the discovery of the most important instrument of communication that the world had seen—the Electric Telegraph. The "Penny Cyclopædia" could scarcely contemplate the wonderful ramifica-

* "The Land we Live In," vol. i. p. 15.

tions of this marvellous invention. It could record that the first line of electric telegraphs had been laid down upon the London and Blackwall Railway; and the formation of the second line from London to West Drayton might also be referred to. How well I remember the ignorant wonder with which, travelling from Windsor to London by the Great Western, I looked upon the erection of tall posts at regular intervals along the line, and, in answer to the inquiry of a foreigner as to their use, told him I thought that they were intended for gas-lamps to light the railway. These mysterious standards were for the application of Mr. Cooke's patent for insulating the wires which had been previously placed in iron tubes, buried beneath the ground. How could we then have conceived that within twenty years there would be a map to the United Kingdom showing the extension of the telegraph, not only to great cities and seats of industry, but to almost every small town and to many a populous village! If this mighty power had even been confined to our own country, and used only in connection with individual affairs, how greatly would it have contributed to the interests of commerce and to the happiness of domestic life. When the railway had been pressed into the service of the new postal system, we might breakfast in London and sleep in Glasgow, after a long day's journey, with the certainty that we could hear from our homes by the next afternoon. We have now that more comfortable assurance, that if any unforeseen event has occurred, or any circumstance been forgotten that we ought to know, we shall find a telegram on our arrival, and by the same agency our own winged words will reach our homes in half an hour.

But who in 1843 could have thought that the whole business of journalism in this country would have been utterly changed by the Electric Telegraph; that the Penny Morning Paper of Manchester would present the summary of a parliamentary debate which had been closed only a few hours earlier; that the "Times," and other journals, would offer to their readers, at six o'clock in the morning, as complete a report of the speeches at a midnight meeting two hundred miles away as of harangues at the same hour in Exeter Hall; and, greatest marvel of all, that, through the application of the Submarine Telegraph, whilst the battle of the dawn is still raging on the shores of the Baltic, the types which are to tell us of the progress of an undecided event are being set up in the evening in a dozen printing offices in London.

CHAPTER XI.

TO attempt the most general view of the condition of manufactures and machinery during the progress of the "Penny Cyclopædia,"—especially bearing in mind the vast changes that would grow out of the removal of the fiscal burthens upon industry, and the gradual development of Free Trade—would be far beyond the scope of these incidental glances at a brighter future. I have touched very lightly upon the subject in the fourth and fifth chapters of this volume. Of the contributors to this department of the "Cyclopædia," I may mention an old friend who has worked with me during many years upon matters of a cognate character, Mr. George Dodd. His careful observation and his punctual industry made him then, as he still continues to be, one of the most useful contributors to serial works. Furnishing not so much in quantity, but what he did always being of signal value, was Mr. Edward Cowper. As an inventor, Mr. Cowper was to me peculiarly interesting, as being connected with those simplifications of the printing machine which brought it into common use.* He felt that it was his great pride to have rendered what was originally a complicated instrument, one capable of adaptation to the purposes of

* *Ante*, vol. i. p. 162.

rapid and cheap book-printing, and of producing such illustrated works as the "Penny Magazine" and the "Penny Cyclopædia." In an examination before a Committee of the House of Commons, he said: "The ease with which the principles and illustrations of Art might be diffused, I think is so obvious that it is hardly necessary to say a word about it. Here you may see it exemplified in the 'Penny Magazine.' Such works as this could not have existed without the printing-machine." Amongst the leading questions or observations by the Committee was this: "In fact the mechanic and the peasant in the most remote districts of the country, have now an opportunity of seeing tolerably correct outlines of form which they never could behold before?" His answer was, "Exactly; and literally at the price they used to give for a song." When asked "Is there not, therefore, a greater chance of calling genius into activity?" he answered, "Yes; not merely by these books creating an artist here and there, but by the general elevation of the taste of the public." Beyond what Mr. Cowper so justly stated with regard to our own country, I may add, that at this period, 1836, the "Penny Magazine" was producing a revolution in popular Art throughout the world. Stereotype casts of its best cuts were supplied by me for the illustration of publications of a similar character, which appeared in eleven different languages and countries. Many interesting considerations are involved in the mere recital of the names of these countries: Germany—France—Holland—Livonia (in Russian and German)—Bohemia (Sclavonic)—Italy—Ionian Islands (modern Greek)—Sweden—Norway—Spanish America—the Brazils.

The entire work was also reprinted in the United States from plates sent from this country. I was not only bound to be grateful to Mr. Cowper for his evidence, but I had long entertained the highest respect for the wide range of his information, and the simplicity of his character. In his latter years he became Professor of Mechanics and Manufacturing Arts at King's College. His mode of teaching was singularly lucid, never trusting to mere descriptions of machinery, so difficult to understand, but illustrating what he had to say by models constructed with a most minute ingenuity. He did not consider it beneath the dignity of a Professor to superintend daily, and actually to work without assistance, a machine of his invention, at the blacking manufactory of Messrs. Day and Martin, for secretly printing the labels of their bottles in a manner which would preclude imitation. It was long before the Arts that had been effectually used for preventing the forgery of blacking labels, were allowed to interfere with the flourishing manufacture of forged bank notes.

Dr. Andrew Ure was a contributor to this department of the "Cyclopædia." In 1835, I published his very interesting volume on "The Philosophy of Manufactures;" and in 1836, his larger work on "The Cotton Manufacture of Great Britain compared with other Countries." He was then analytical chemist to the Board of Customs. There were many special articles on Manufactures and Machinery, by men conversant with particular branches. Amongst various names, there is one which stands out prominent, although processes and mechanical principles were not exactly in his line. Edwin Norris has won

his distinguished position and his high reputation by his labours as a philological and ethnological writer. In the "Companion to the Almanac" for 1830, he furnished a striking example of the range and accuracy of his peculiar knowledge, in a most complete explanation of "The Eras of Ancient and Modern Times, and of various Countries." He still renders me the kindness of supplying to the "British Almanac" the brief notices under each month of the Hebrew Calendar and the Mohammedan Calendar. I knew him with some degree of intimacy, upon which I look back with pleasure, in the years before his great knowledge of languages gave him the high appointment of Secretary to the Royal Asiatic Society, and the onerous responsibility of translator to the Foreign Office. In our earliest intercourse, he not only won my regard by his intellectual and moral qualities, but to me he was especially interesting as the son of a newspaper proprietor at Taunton. He had acquired the practical knowledge of a printer; but, passionately fond of travelling, and devoted to studies whose usefulness was not exactly to be manifested in provincial journalism, he went to the continent as a private tutor, and remained abroad several years. In his pedestrian tours from city to city his remittances from home sometimes failed to reach him. He had resources in himself which were ever ready to secure his independence as a citizen of the world. Arriving at a certain town, he found himself almost penniless. Applying to the principal printer, he solicits employment as a compositor. He states his knowledge of foreign languages. Work is slack, and the young linguist is about to look further. "Stop!" says the typographical successor of the Stephenses (for I

believe the town was Geneva). "Stop! I have been printing a Hebrew Bible, of which a little is done; but I can find nobody here to finish it. Can you undertake the job and go through with it?" The job was undertaken, and it was completed. I need give no better illustration of that force of character which, in the instance of Mr. Norris, was one of many manifestations of that power which we are accustomed to call Genius.

In the department of the Fine Arts, Mr. Eastlake (now Sir Charles) contributed a few valuable papers —such as Basso Rilievo. Sir Edmund Head also wrote on painting, as did my old friend J. P. Davis. Mr. R. N. Wornum (now Keeper of the National Gallery) gave to the Cyclopædia the advantage of his almost unequalled knowledge of the general history and character of Schools of Art, and of the lives of the great painters. And here I may take occasion to mention—not only with reference to the biographies of artists, but of those of the eminent in Science, in Literature, in Statesmanship, in Theology, in Law—that the plan of the "Penny Cyclopædia" being such as to forbid the introduction of any living person, was necessarily limited and imperfect. Under the superintendence of the Useful Knowledge Society, it would have been very difficult, if not impossible, to have widened the biographical circle, so as to include many of those who were daily coming into contact with members of its committee in the friendships or the rivalries of Politics or letters. When the superintendence of the Society had ceased, the "English Cyclopædia" was free to take a wider range. It was with considerable reluctance that, as the conductor of the enlarged work,

I decided upon the introduction of the names of living persons, British and Foreign. There are, doubtless, grave objections to such a course; but the advantages, looking at them strictly in the literary point of view, are very manifest. A Cyclopædia that deals only with those of whom it may speak with the absolute freedom of the "honest chronicler" who is to keep the honour of the dead from corruption, must be, if not half a century, at least three or four decades behind the wants of the existing generation. This is an era in no respects more remarkable than for the long lives of many eminent men. Lord Lyndhurst, for example, died in 1863, at the age of ninety-one. Because his place was not in the necrology of the century till that year, is the historical student to learn nothing from a biographical dictionary of the John Singleton Copley, who was counsel for Watson and Thistlewood in 1817? William Mulready died in 1863, at the age of seventy-eight. The young Irishman was a student of the Royal Academy in 1801. He was a Royal Academician in 1816. Was the most successful rival of Wilkie not to be noticed in a popular biography whilst his works were still the theme of admiration, and the old man could still look critically, but generously, upon the productions of celebrated artists who were unborn, or were mere boys, when he was in the zenith of his fame? Difficulties in such an undertaking there unquestionably were; but these were to be overcome by obtaining, wherever possible, from living persons themselves authentic materials; and above all, by avoiding rash inferences and hypothetical explanations.

Photography, in spite of the protests of land-

scape painters and portrait painters, has taken rank amongst the Fine Arts. Its imperfect beginnings only could have been noticed in the "Penny Cyclopædia." When Arago, in 1839, communicated to the French Academy of Sciences that Daguerre had discovered a process by which objects could be faithfully represented by other agencies than the hand of man, the world was at first incredulous, as if an attempt had been made to revive the middle-age miracles. Englishmen came home from Paris with dim representations of buildings, and hideous copies of their own features, sun-painted on metal. Such were the first Daguerreotypes. Mr. Fox Talbot, who had been working out this discovery at the same period as Daguerre, soon produced his Talbotypes on paper, and, in 1841, described his process to the Society of Arts. But, as yet, photographic portraits and landscapes were regarded as mere curiosities. In twenty years photography was to bestow an amount of pleasure upon every class of society which had never been attained in any age by the imitative arts. It may not be too much to regard it as one of the special blessings of a beneficent Providence, that, at a period when steam navigation has dispersed the European races over the most distant regions of the habitable globe, there should have sprung up an invention which brings into the dwelling of the colonizer, whether a mansion or a cabin, the very scenes of the *home* he has left, and the images of the loved ones from whom he is separated.

This leads me briefly to advert to the Geographical department of the "Penny Cyclopædia." This section also stopped short in 1843, in tracing that march of English adventure which had made new

nations in the days of Elizabeth, but which had not yet accomplished the wonderful development of the Australian colonies during the reign of Victoria. There was a great deal to be done by the encyclopædist of the next twenty years. But what was done by us, especially in the department of Physical Geography, was of a character very different from the matter that had previously occupied the most elaborate geographical works. The chief contributor was Mr. William Wittich, who became Teacher of German at University College. I have heard Mr. Long declare, that he considered Mr. Wittich as the father of descriptive geography in this country. Of many other contributors to the geographical department, I must be content to mention the names of Sir Francis Beaufort, Sir J. F. Davis, Colonel Jackson, Mr. Smith, Secretary of King's College, and Mr. Means. Karl Ritter, the celebrated professor at Berlin, wrote the important article "Asia." Of André Vieusseux and of William Weir, whose contributions were extensive, I shall have subsequently to speak.

In the Natural History division of the Cyclopædia, I must especially mention Mr. William John Broderip, who contributed nearly all the Zoological articles of the entire work. No more remarkable example could have been presented of a man zealously discharging responsible official duties, and finding his best recreation in scientific pursuits, than Mr. Broderip. He was for thirty-four years one of the most industrious and upright Police Magistrates of the Metropolis. In writing a brief memoir of this learned and at the same time entertaining naturalist, I have said: "His articles in the 'Cyclopædia' are models of scientific exactness and popular attrac-

tion; and whilst they have instructed and delighted thousands of readers, have won the suffrages of the most fastidious, even amongst those who are slow to believe that the solid and the amusing have no necessary antagonism." In the section of Geology, Mr. John Phillips, Professor of that science in King's College, was a most valuable contributor. In that of Botany, Dr. Lindley wrote all the articles up to the letter R. Dr. Edwin Lankester, who had studied under Dr. Lindley at University College, gave also his valuable assistance to the original work, and subsequently edited the Natural History Division of its successor.

In Law and Jurisprudence, the "Penny Cyclopædia" was a most complete repository of information, historical and practical. The constitution of the Useful Knowledge Society, of which many eminent lawyers were members, gave an authority to its legal articles even before the names of its contributors were given to the world. As there were also eminent physicians and surgeons, the same prestige attached to its articles on Medical Science. A mere catalogue of the names of these professional men would scarcely be interesting, unless I were to trace the career of some who were only slightly known at the period of their early contributions, but who have subsequently risen into high reputation. Such, amongst the medical contributors, was the late Dr. Baley, whose useful life was so grievously cut short by a railway accident; such was Mr. J. Paget, the distinguished surgeon; such, Mr. John Simon, who, as the medical officer of the General Board of Health, has accomplished so much for sanitary reform. Dr. Robert Dickson, whose benevolence is as conspicuous as his knowledge, contributed all the articles on Materia Medica. Nor

must I omit Dr. Southwood Smith, who supplied many of the articles on Anatomy, Medicine, and Physiology. I was his publisher also of that interesting popular work, "The Philosophy of Health." Now that his most useful life has closed, I may mention a circumstance which I should have hesitated previously to print. Dr. Smith's book, "The Use of the Dead to the Living," chiefly led to the passing of the Anatomy Act, by which an end was put to the necessity of the hateful tribe of Resurrection Men, and to such atrocities as those which had been committed in Edinburgh and London, where adults and children had been systematically murdered by the vampires of modern times, who sold their bodies to the anatomical schools. Dr. Southwood Smith had been the intimate friend of Jeremy Bentham. It was the wish of the venerable philosopher that his body should be dissected, and for that purpose he left it to the enlightened physician who had been his attendant at the time of his death. Having called upon Dr. Smith at his house in the city, as I was going away he said, in his quiet manner, "Would you like to see Bentham?" I could not quite comprehend him; but leading the way into his hall, he unlocked, with a small key that hung to his watch-chain, a mahogany case, something like the sedan chair of a past generation. Behind an inner covering of plate-glass sat the figure of the old jurist in the identical clothes which he had worn living; a waxen face, round which was clustering the white hair, was covered with his well-known broad-brimmed hat, and he leant on the trusty stick with which he had so often paced the Green Park. I long stood absorbed

in many thoughts of the great man's career. Dr. Smith withdrew the glass, opened the few buttons of the waistcoat, and then showed the skeleton, which preached the same lesson to the pride of human wisdom as the skull of "poor Yorick" laid to the gibes that were wont "to set the table in a roar."

Collected for the purpose of separate publication in the remodelled "English Cyclopædia," it was found that the biographical articles of the original work constituted its largest division. It may, therefore, be concluded that in this place I can only notice the leading features of that division, and a few only of its contributors. Those who wrote the articles on history and literature, ancient and modern, furnished, for the most part, the series of biographies. It may be sufficient to point to articles by Thomas Hewitt Key, George Cornewall Lewis, George Long, Leonard Schmitz, Dr. Donaldson, Philip Smith, and William Smith, to show how completely these Lives were calculated to supersede the inaccurate sciolisms of Lemprière and similar manufacturers of Classical Dictionaries. Nor is it necessary that I should particularly specify those who brought their historical and literary knowledge to build up the compact, but yet full, Biographia Britannica, which our work presents, even without the subsequent addition of living names. The writers of these articles are generally well known in their more extended reputations as authors of separate works. But there was a class of writers whom Mr. Long had the good fortune to collect around him, who had previously added little to the stores of English learning. I allude to the eminent foreigners who wrote in the "Cyclopædia," some in our language, others in their

own. The editorial care either corrected the foreign idioms—sometimes peeping out of their English compositions—or procured accurate translations of the French, Italian, German, Spanish, and Portuguese, in which some wrote. One foreigner whose English required little correction, if any, was André Vieusseux. I had been intimate with this most amiable and accomplished man from the time when he wrote in the "Quarterly Magazine." I had published, in 1824, his delightful work, "Italy and the Italians." My pleasant and improving intercourse with him was renewed when he became one of the most industrious contributors to the "Cyclopædia." His life had been a varied and eventful one. As a youth he had seen the bloody course of revolution in Naples, when it was doubtful which was most to be hated—monarchical oppression or democratic fury. He had fought in the Peninsular War, as an officer in one of the foreign legions. After the peace, he had settled in England upon a small independence, to which he was enabled to add by literary labour. His conscientious devotion to the right performance of whatever he undertook, his large experience, and his correct taste, made him one of our most valuable coadjutors. In German literature, Dr. Leonard Schmitz was as useful as in classical. Pascual de Gayangos, who had married an English lady, also wrote fluently in our language during his residence amongst us. His perfect acquaintance with Arabic gave him a mastery over the general and literary history of Spain during the mediæval period, which few of his countrymen have attained. His biographies in the "Cyclopædia"—Spanish and Oriental—are, therefore, particularly

valuable. Another great Oriental scholar, Frederick Augustus Rosen, was the Sanskrit Professor in University College. In the "Penny Cyclopædia" he wrote all the articles on Oriental literature from "Abbasides" to "Ethiopian Language." His labours were terminated by his sudden death in 1837, at the age of thirty-two. This distinguished native of Hanover acquired in England a host of friends, whose admiration he had won by his high intellectual attainments, and whose love was commanded by his gentle manners and kind heart. Count Krasinski was one of the Polish exiles in England to whom literature had become the only means of support. He came here on a diplomatic mission, in 1830, from the revolutionary government, of which Prince Czartoryski was president. In 1831, when the hope of Polish independence was again crushed, he dwelt among us a penniless fugitive, until his death in 1855. His contributions to the "Penny Cyclopædia" were on the Sclavonian history and literature.

I have passed over Music, in referring to the department of Fine Arts, that I may more particularly notice the amount of musical taste and knowledge amongst us twenty years ago. Mr. William Ayrton could scarcely, during the time I knew him, be called a Professor of Music, although some few years previous the opera had been under his management. A man of education, he moved in the best society; whilst his ability as a writer, combined with his extensive musical knowledge, fitted him to contribute the whole series of musical biographies to the "Penny Cyclopædia." He had previously edited for me a work which, I may flatter myself, contributed something to that great change which has made the

English of the reign of Queen Victoria as musical a people as their ancestors of Queen Elizabeth's time. The moveable types used in the "Musical Library" furnished the means of producing vocal and instrumental music from the best masters, in weekly sheets of eight pages, sold at about a quarter of the price of the ordinary sheet of the music shops. The period was then only beginning when an idea penetrated the English mind, that in music, as in the other Fine Arts, anything but the common-place and vulgar could have any charms for the bulk of the people. Profound philosophers believed that nothing else could please, theatrical managers affirmed that nothing else would draw. The great and fashionable firmly relied upon the unchangeableness of the opinion—though a hundred and twenty years old—of Isaac Bickerstaff, who says: "In Italy, nothing is more frequent than to hear a cobbler working to an opera tune; but, on the contrary, our honest countrymen have so little an inclination to music, that they seldom begin to sing till they are drunk." In the "Penny Magazine" for 1834, it was said: "The theatres and other public places have administered to bad taste: little or nothing except trash has been open to the people; and they have been deemed barbarians because they took what fell in their way, and showed no love for what they never had an opportunity of knowing. We trust, however, that, for the future, good music, like good literature, may be made accessible to all; and that, as a mode of enlarging the cheap enjoyments of a poor man's life, even every village school in the kingdom may possess the means of teaching (as they are taught at similar establishments in several districts of Germany, in

Bohemia, and even in the snow-covered, poverty-stricken island of Iceland) the art of reading musical notation and the first rudiments of music."

I have traced the greatest work of the Useful Knowledge Society to its completion at the end of eleven years. Let me revert to its opening period, when the friends of Popular Education had not only to build up the walls of their citadel, but to work with weapons at their side. When the "Penny Magazine," during two years' existence, had reached a sale quite unprecedented in Popular Literature, and after the first year's publication, with marked success, of the "Penny Cyclopædia," a series of attacks, as unceasing as they were virulent, were directed against the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, and against me, especially, as their chief instrument in the fearful revolution which was threatening to destroy the legitimate thrones and dominations of the empire of books. The Society was a monopoly; the "Penny Magazine" was "a glorious humbug upon the reading portion of the operatives," for it was nothing more than a bookseller's speculation, which "brings in Knight some thousands per annum;" the idea of the "Penny Cyclopædia" was stolen from a respectable man, who was struggling to maintain a young family, "by a trader, who, because he has the name of the Society painted on his sign-board, seems to think himself entitled to throw off all the ordinary restraints to which fair rivalry in trade is subject;" * the writers in these works were literary drudges—obscure literary drudges, without a single idea in their heads, save what they filch from the British Museum.

* Ante, p. 200.

Such was the temper in which the "New Monthly Magazine" poured out the vials of its wrath on my devoted head. It was necessary to publish a few facts, with very little comment, to show the falsehoods and absurdities of the daily, weekly, and monthly assaults of this complexion. That was done, with the sanction of the Society, in the "Companion to the Almanac," in December, 1833. On the 15th of February, 1834, I published No. I. of "The Printing Machine, a Review for the Many;" and therein, in an article entitled "The Literary Newspapers," I uttered, perhaps with more spirit than prudence, some unpalatable remonstrances against the systematic hostility of the two journals which I described as "the advanced guard of the army of letters, who carry small baggage on their march." The attacks soon became more personal.

Towards the end of that February, I was proposed as a member of the "Garrick Club." In the second week of March a very dear friend, my solicitor, Mr. Thomas Clarke, came to me to say that the Committee of that Club were hesitating about my election, as I had been excluded from a Club which had been formed out of members of the "Literary Union," such exclusion involving some serious imputation upon my character and conduct. I had been a member of the "Literary Union" for three or four years. Several gentlemen immediately undertook to ascertain the nature of the charges against me; and I was in a few days authorised by two of these friends to rest the vindication of my character upon the ground that the imputation made in the Committee of the "Literary Union Club," appointed for the formation of a New Club, was, that I had

formerly failed in business—and dishonourably failed—that I "had made a bad bankruptcy." In twenty-four hours I had possessed myself of the means of my vindication. The publication of an indignant letter addressed by me to the Committee, accompanied by the documents which they had refused to look at, was my only course. That paper was circulated by me to a limited extent. It consisted of letters from my three trustees, a London printer, a London stationer, and a banker of Windsor, and one also from the solicitor to the trustees. They were to the effect that my suspension of payments was not to be attributed in the slightest degree to any misconduct, or even imprudence, on my part; but was an unavoidable result of the Panic of 1825, which so materially diminished the value of all bookselling property; that the final resolution to place my affairs under the management of trustees was come to by my creditors with the greatest reluctance to interfere with my own administration of my estate; that the anxious and self-denying care with which I abstained from receiving a single shilling of its proceeds after that resolution had been come to, was a striking instance of firmness and integrity; that I had been unvarying in my determination not to consider the release from my engagements as at all binding, except in a legal point of view, and had unweariedly laboured to discharge every debt in full, just as if no such acquittance had taken place, going far beyond what they thought a duty to my own family.

It is not from any motive of self-exaltation that I revive this matter, never to touch it again. My own deep feeling of gratitude to the eminent men with whom I was associated in the Useful Knowledge

Society is called forth now, when I glance at the many warm letters from them which this occurrence produced. Nor do I feel less grateful to Mr. Coates, their secretary, for his letters to me at this juncture. My friends were anxious that the stigma of my exclusion from this so-called Literary Club should be effectually wiped off by my election to the most distinguished Club in London. Lord Lansdowne, in a letter addressed to the Lord Chancellor, full of the most hearty kindness towards me, declared his opinion upon the wishes that my friends had expressed on my behalf: "There is no man in England better entitled than Knight to come into the Athenæum," and he subsequently agreed to propose me as a member. This Lord Lansdowne did, with a full knowledge of the circumstances. The Bishop of Winchester, whose conduct to me since 1827 had been marked by unvarying kindness and generosity, wished to support my nomination. Many other leading members of that Club—and I was glad to have Mr. Murray amongst the number—volunteered their aid. But party feeling then ran high, and I was unwilling to risk a contest, which might renew what was very disagreeable to me as a subject of public discussion. The "Garrick Club Committee" elected me after a brief interval. I became also one of the early members of the "Reform Club."

The hostility against the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, which had been manifested by a small section of the periodical press, gradually died out. Public opinion was louder than the cuckoo cry of "monopoly" that was shouted by fashionable publishers and echoed by a clique of the regular professors of "*la littérature facile.*" Those who wrote

for the Society had been called in derision "compilers." The "men of genius" who despised industry as dulness had their little day of sarcasm against "literary drudges," but in the end the public many was too strong for the exclusive few. The bookselling trade—publishers as well as retailers—had also discovered that, in the manifest extension of readers, a reliance might be placed upon the principle of increased numbers co-operating to purchase cheap books, and that enlarged returns would make up for diminished profits upon dear books. They had discovered that the trade of books would not be destroyed by cheap weekly sheets. If they had not arrived, through a process of reasoning, at the belief that the more people read the more they will read, they had the evidence of their own ledgers to inform them that the literary returns of the United Kingdom had nearly doubled since the terrible era of cheapness which commenced in 1827. Books, which at the beginning of the century had been a luxury, had now become a necessity. Still the objection was urged that, however extended was the market for popular literature, the quality of the supply must as a matter of course be low. The "Penny Cyclopædia" furnished a very sufficient answer to such reasoners.

The calumnies with which I had been personally assailed had not accomplished their object—that of injuring me as a man of business. They did not lessen the regard of my old friends, nor did they cut me off from the confidence which secured me a new and important connexion. Within another year I became associated as Publisher with the great measure of Local Administration that had received the sanction of Parliament.

Towards the close of 1833 was published by authority, "Extracts from the Information received by His Majesty's Commissioners, as to the Administration and Operation of the Poor Laws." I have mentioned that at the end of 1832 I had been permitted by the Lord Chancellor to look over some portion of this evidence. The facts of which I derived a knowledge from a partial glance at these papers, and the discussions which arose upon them, made a deep impression on my mind.

Some preliminary extracts from the large mass of evidence were published early enough to enable me to allude to their bearing, in "An Address to the Subscribers to the Windsor and Eton Public Library," which I delivered in October, 1833. I said "I was forcibly struck by some evidence given before the Poor Law Commissioners, which went to show that in those parishes where the agricultural labourers had, to the greatest extent, lost their feeling of independence and self-respect, and were consequently ignorant and ill-informed, they had proportionally fallen off even in the knowledge and practice of what constitutes a good workman in their own business. This is, indeed, one of the many proofs that a man will become a better ploughman or a better hedger, by knowing something more than how to drive a team or cut a stake. It was truly said before these same commissioners by the assistant-overseer of this very town, that he could tell in a moment, by the neat or the slovenly appearance of the cottages, whether the tenants of them were, or were not, receiving parochial relief. I believe, if we were to examine the matter still more narrowly, we should find in the same appearance of the dwellings of the

poor a pretty correct indication of the state of knowledge amongst their inmates. Books are, no doubt, the readiest roads to knowledge; but there may be a great deal of knowledge, and a great deal of taste, without any very extensive acquaintance with books. If I enter the premises of a working man, and find his garden deformed with weeds—his once latticed porch broken and unseemly—his walls discoloured—his hearth dirty,—I know that there is little self-respect in the master of that hovel, and that he flies from his comfortless home to the nightly gratification which the ale-house supplies. But show me the trim crocus in the spring, or the gorgeous dahlia in the autumn, flourishing in his neat enclosure—let me see the vine or the monthly rose covering his cottage walls in regulated luxuriance—let me find within, the neatly sanded floor, the well-polished furniture, a few books, and a print or two over his chimney, and I am satisfied that the occupiers of that cottage have a principle at work within them which will do much to keep them from misery and degradation."

When the entire evidence was published, as well as the first Report of the Commissioners, I could honestly express my convictions of the detestable nature of the system under which we had been living up to that period. In "The Journal of Education" for July, 1834, I wrote an article on "Pauperism and Education," which I think was not an exaggerated representation of a state of society which has, in a great degree, happily passed away. The whole of our vicious system of administering the Poor Laws was stimulated by the general ignorance of the rate-payers. The practical men, as they called themselves, who turned up their noses at political philosophers,

contrived to get some ten or twenty millions of public money annually to pass through their fingers, in the shape of poor's-rates, and church-rates, and highway-rates, and county-rates; and to apply these moneys, each according to his own fancy, with that intuitive perception of what is just and expedient that produced the follies and miseries described in so many particulars in the evidence then recently published. When we considered how many important functions the higher and middle classes of this country were called upon to discharge—member of Parliament, magistrate, corporator, road-commissioner, churchwarden, overseer, surveyor of highways, trustee of charities—it was almost incredible that a glimmering of political knowledge should not break through the "darkness visible" of our various systems of public education. But there was another consequence of the ignorance and indifference of the upper and middle classes which was not quite so manifest an evil as their waste of the public money. While I held that the poor-laws could not be better administered until those who administered them were better educated, I maintained that the necessity for a vigilant, and even a severe, administration of them would never cease, until the working classes could be raised by improved education completely above a dependence upon charitable relief, whether forced or voluntary. The poor man must be made a thinking man—a man capable of intellectual pleasures; he must be purified in his tastes, and elevated in his understanding; he must be taught to comprehend the real dignity of all useful employments; he must learn to look upon the distinctions of society without envy or servility; he must respect them, for they are open

to him as well as to others; but he must respect himself more. The best enjoyments of our nature might be common to him and the most favoured by fortune: let him be taught how to appreciate them. Diminish the attractions of his sensual enjoyments by extending the range of his mental pleasures. It was not enough to teach him what was taught in our national schools. Oberlin, the pastor of Waldbach, whose memoirs were published about this time, did not fear that he should get no labourers, because he instructed his poor children in botany, and drawing, and music.

In March, 1834, Mr. Edwin Chadwick—with whom I had then the pleasure to form an intimacy of which I have had the benefit for thirty years—wrote to me, "The Government will have up-hill work to carry the Poor-Law Reform, and will need all direct and indirect aid that the press and good men can give them." No effort of the press could be more effective than Mr. Chadwick's Report, as one of the Assistant-Commissioners of Inquiry. Its merits were so striking that he was at once raised to the higher position of a Commissioner of that Inquiry. The "up-hill work," which Mr. Chadwick anticipated, endured in both Houses of Parliament from the 17th of April to the 14th of August, when the Poor Law Amendment Act received the Royal assent. It empowered his Majesty to appoint three Commissioners for England and Wales, to carry the Act into execution. Those appointed were—The Right Hon. Thomas Frankland Lewis, John George Shaw Lefevre, Esq., and George Nicholls, Esq. The Secretary to the Board, also appointed by the Crown, was Edwin Chadwick, Esq.

On the 6th of December, 1834, the first Union of Parishes was formed. In September, 1835, the Commissioners published their first Annual Report, in which they announced that they had united 2066 parishes, constituting 112 unions. During this gradual introduction of the new measure, I had been appointed "Publisher by Authority" to the Commission. My appointment was not an affair of favouritism, as it was represented to be. Under the schedule to the Act, certain forms were prescribed for the administration of unions, including a few for keeping their accounts. These were necessarily open to all persons to print and to publish. Account books were prepared and advertised, but they were to be sold to the Local Boards at such an extravagantly dear rate, that if all the parishes of the country were to be embodied in unions, the mere expense of stationery would have been a frightful item in the annual charges. I saw pretty clearly that the demand for forms and books of account would soon be a very large one, and that the principle of cheapness might be applied here with the same advantage as in other productions of the printing press. I laid my plans before a Board at Somerset House. The attention with which the three Commissioners and their Secretary listened to me was most encouraging in my attempt to surmount the difficulty which presented itself, and which was also a real embarrassment to the Commissioners. In three weeks many unions would come into operation. It was necessary that all their accounts should be kept upon a uniform system. Other forms of Out-door Relief and of Workhouse management were required besides those prescribed

by the Act. The experience that I had gained in my Windsor days enabled me to suggest some of the more important of these. Mr. Nicholls, whose capacity for high administrative functions had been trained in the humbler but important position of overseer of his own parish of Southwell—where he introduced some of those effective reforms which were embraced in the new Act—suggested many valuable forms, and bestowed upon mine the most careful supervision. By working night and day, the books of account were ready to be sold to every union and every parish as they came under the operation of the Act. If my appointment was not an affair of favoritism, neither was it one of monopoly. It was stipulated that, whilst the authority under which I published would entitle me to receive early official communications, the right of printing and publishing whatever emanated from the Commission should be enjoyed by any others who should print the books correctly and publish them as cheaply as myself. Upon this principle I have harmoniously worked with the Poor-Law Commissioners and the Poor-Law Board during thirty years.

I cannot pass over the days of my early intercourse with the Poor-Law Commissioners, without adverting to the unvarying kindness which I received from the two gentlemen with whom I was most brought in contact—those eminent public servants who are now Sir John Shaw Lefevre and Sir George Nicholls. To both I am grateful for many tokens of regard. With Sir George Nicholls I have enjoyed for many years a friendship which I cannot value too highly.

CHAPTER XII.

NEXT to the "Cyclopædia" in the costliness of its production, if not in intrinsic importance, was the "Gallery of Portraits," which I published under the superintendence of the Society. It was issued in monthly numbers at half-a-crown each number, containing three portraits with biographies. The object of the publication was to present likenesses of those eminent men of modern times who have given the greatest impulse to their age. In the selection of subjects for portraiture, the Committee was occupied from the beginning of 1832 (the first number being published in May), to the midsummer of 1834. Their occupation was of a most pleasant and improving kind, for there was scarcely a name suggested that did not involve some discussion upon the merits of those proposed to be represented, or some statement of the sources from which authentic portraits might be obtained. In this latter respect the influence of the Society, or that of its individual members, was most valuable, by securing the admission of copyists to Royal Galleries and private collections. British and Foreign statesmen, warriors, divines, men of science and letters, artists, were thus assigned their due honour in a work, which was essentially different in its plan from the "Portraits of Illustrious Personages of Great Britain," by

Edmund Lodge, Norroy King of Arms. Interesting as much of Mr. Lodge's information was in its genealogical and antiquarian features, the book was not what it professed to be, "A Gallery of the Illustrious Dead"—"A Collection of Portraits and Lives of British Worthies." It was a collection of kings and queens, of noble lords and ladies and officers of state. It was, with very few exceptions, not a gallery of the intellectually illustrious. Of the chief glories of our nation—the poets, historians, philosophers, divines, of the inventors and discoverers in physical and abstract science, of our most distinguished artists, there was not one in this "Gallery of the Illustrious Dead," unless he could claim a place there by some titular or official distinction. Very different was the range of the gallery which I considered it an honour to publish, and the large expenses of which I cheerfully bore until the work became remunerative. The merit of suggesting it, and of most assiduously labouring to carry it worthily forward, is due to Mr. Bellenden Ker. The superintendence of the engravings was confided to Mr. Lupton, a mezzotinto engraver of the first eminence. Mr. Arthur Malkin was the editor of the biographies. These are all distinguished for careful research and an unpretending style. A few of the lives were written by his personal friends, amongst whom was Arthur H. Hallam—the A. H. H. of Tennyson's "In Memoriam"—who died in 1833. From De Quincey I obtained a spirited memoir of Milton; and it was to me a matter of regret, that its length was so out of proportion to the general character of the work, that some curtailment was absolutely necessary.

The 13th of August, 1836, was a remarkable day

in the annals of the press of this country, for on that day two Acts of Parliament received the Royal Assent, which materially influenced all the commercial arrangements for rendering knowledge, political or literary, more accessible to the bulk of the people. The first of these (c. 52), was to reduce the duties on first-class paper from three-pence per pound to three-halfpence, so that the former tax of three-halfpence upon second-class paper should apply to paper of all descriptions. The second of these (c. 76), was to reduce the stamp on newspapers from fourpence to a penny. I have previously mentioned (page 180), a debate in the House of Commons, on the 22nd of May, 1834, upon a motion for the repeal of the newspaper stamp duties. I had at that time learnt something of the desire of several members of the government, including Lord Brougham and Lord Althorp, that these duties should be wholly repealed. Had that been the case, a difficulty would have arisen as to the transmission of unstamped newspapers by post. In a letter to Lord Althorp, I suggested that a penny stamped frank should be issued by the government. Mr. M. D. Hill, in the debate which I have mentioned, described the nature of this suggestion. In the "Companion to the Newspaper," for June the 1st, 1834, there appeared a paper of considerable length "prepared several months ago for the information of some official personages who took a strong interest in the question of the repeal of the stamp duties on newspapers." In that paper it is said, "In order to allow the unstamped papers to pass through the Post-office, it is proposed that franks should be sold (say by the vendors of stamps), at a penny each. It

will be necessary to make the postage payable by the person sending the paper; for otherwise, a great many papers, especially the very low-priced ones, would be refused by persons to whom they were addressed. It is obvious that a direct payment to the Post-office, by the transmitter of the paper, would be highly inconvenient, if not impossible. Mr. Knight's plan of a stamped frank obviates the difficulty; and it would facilitate the transmission of all printed sheets under a certain weight." It has always been to me a matter of honest pride that this suggestion contributed, in however small a degree, to the efficient working of the magnificent system of penny-postage. Mr. Rowland Hill, in his celebrated pamphlet on Post-office Reform, published in 1837, says, "A few years ago, when the expediency of entirely abolishing the newspaper stamp, and allowing newspapers to pass through the Post-office for one penny each, was under consideration, it was proposed by Mr. Charles Knight, the publisher, that the postage on newspapers might be collected by selling stamped wrappers at one penny each. Availing myself of this excellent suggestion, I propose the following arrangement:—Let stamped covers and sheets of paper be supplied to the public from the Stamp-office, or Post-office, as may be most convenient, and sold at such a price as to include the postage: letters so stamped, might be put into the letter-box as at present."

In 1836, my views, as to the total repeal of the Stamp Duty on Newspapers, were considerably altered from those of 1834, when, in suggesting a plan for the circulation of unstamped newspapers, I had adopted the opinion that the stamp, except as a

postage payment, was injurious. I was apprehensive, as I was before the removal of the stamp in 1855, that cheap newspapers would involve the degradation of journalism. I did not draw sound conclusions from my own experience. I did not believe that Penny Papers would be as innoxious as Penny Magazines and Penny Cyclopædias, and go on making readers, till the great body of those who read would prefer sound nutriment to the garbage which was offered them in the days of high taxation. As in most cases, my own interest gave a colour, I suppose, to my opinions. From the time when William Henry Ord was a contributor to "The Etonian," to the time when he was a Member of Parliament and a Lord of the Treasury, I had some degree of intimacy, almost amounting to friendship, with this amiable and accomplished man. In 1836, in his official position, he had devoted himself to the great measure of the consolidation of the various Stamp Acts. The mass of obscure and confused enactments was to be swept away, and some intelligible fiscal measure was to be substituted. Mr. Ord devoted himself to the herculean task of preparing the way for the proposition which was brought forward by Mr. Spring Rice, then Chancellor of the Exchequer. The labour killed him. In the spring of 1836, I frequently saw him. We had many conversations on the subject of the Newspaper Stamp Duties and the Paper Duty. I fancied that if the government consented to abolish the Newspaper Stamp, they would retain the high Paper Duty. Mr. Ord and I came to the opinion that the safest and the best course would be to lower both imposts. I wrote a pamphlet advocating this policy, which was circu-

lated amongst members of both Houses. Whether it had any effect upon the settlement of the question is not for me to judge. At any rate, the reduction of the Paper Duty was to me a matter of vital importance; and when that boon to the publishers of cheap books came into operation in the autumn, I felt that I had shaken off much of the insupportable weight of the "Old Man of the Sea," and went forward with the words of Milton in my heart:

"To-morrow to fresh fields and pastures new."

In 1835, Mr. Bellenden Ker having returned from a continental tour, gave me some numbers of a work then publishing in Germany, the "Bilder Bibel." An idea had once been entertained of the Useful Knowledge Society publishing a Bible—an illustrated one; but the notion was given up as impracticable, and not in accordance with the principle upon which the Society was established. Mr. Ker's present revived the project in my mind. Such a publication, in which Art should be employed to delight the young, and learning should not be wanting, offered a strong temptation to my individual enterprise. But the difficulty was to find a fit editor—one who held sound opinions upon the great cardinal points of religion, but who would at the same time content himself with furnishing an ample commentary on such passages as are connected with the History, Geography, Natural History, and Antiquities of the Sacred Scriptures. Thus to limit the objects of the work was to make it acceptable to all denominations of Christians. I had several conversations on this matter with a very learned and liberal divine; but he could not see his course clearly, in

avoiding theological questions. I often thought of dividing the labour; and with this view I proposed to Mr. Kitto to furnish notes upon such subjects as had come under his observation during his travels and sojourn in the East. This task he gladly undertook. In a few weeks he came to me and said—in that guttural voice to which I had now become accustomed—"I will undertake it all." We had a little merriment over the boldness of the proposal; but I found that he was perfectly in earnest. As a matter of prudence I proposed that he should complete the book of Genesis, and after that we could determine upon the future course of proceeding. He accomplished this to my complete satisfaction. The enthusiasm with which he entered upon the task was to me an earnest that he could well be trusted to carry it through faithfully. I released him from all other employments; and so, at the beginning of 1836, the first number of "The Pictorial Bible" was issued. In hitting upon the word "Pictorial" I felt that I was rather daring in the employment of a term which the Dictionaries pronounced as "not in use." It has now been rendered familiar by frequent employment. I could not have easily found any other word that would have conveyed the intention to present wood-engravings of the scriptural designs of great painters; of landscape scenes; of costume; of zoology and botany; of the remains of ancient architecture. "The Pictorial Bible" was completed in two years and a half. To me it was profitable, costly as were the wood-cuts. The profit was doubly welcome from the fact, that after having paid Mr. Kitto, during the progress of publication, 250*l.* a-year, I was enabled, upon the completion of the book, to

present him with a sum which seemed to him a little fortune. A letter which Mr. Kitto wrote to me, as the work was proceeding, has been published by his biographer: "I cannot begin any observations respecting 'The Pictorial Bible,' without stating how highly I have been gratified and interested in the occupation it has afforded. It has been of infinite advantage as an exercise to my own mind. It has afforded me an opportunity of bringing nearly all my resources into play; my old biblical studies, the observations of travel, and even the very miscellaneous character of my reading, have all been highly useful to me in this undertaking. The venerable character of the work on which I have laboured, the responsibility of annotation, and the extent in which such labour is likely to have influence, are also circumstances which have greatly gratified, in a very definite manner, that desire of usefulness, which has, I may say, been a strong principle of action with me, and which owes its origin, I think, to the desire I was early led to entertain of finding whether the most adverse circumstances (including the privation of intellectual nourishment) must necessarily operate in excluding me from the hope of filling a useful place in society. The question was, whether I should hang a dead weight upon society, or take a place among its active men. I have struggled for the latter alternative, and it will be a proud thing for me if I am enabled to realise it. I venture to hope that I shall: and to you I am, in the most eminent degree, indebted for the opportunities, assistance, and encouragement you have always afforded me in my endeavours after this object." *

* Life of John Kitto, D.D., by John Eadie, D.D., 1857, p. 304.

My project of a "Pictorial Bible" was derived from Germany. But the "Bilder Bibel," a coarse and inelegant publication for the humbler classes, was the child of the "Biblia Pauperum" of the days of block-printing. The Bible of the poor was, like the Mysteries of the days before the drama, one of the means by which the Roman Church made its pageants and superstitions stand in the place of true religion. At the great festival at Mayence, in 1837, in honour of Gutenburg, the first printer, I was one of the crowd in the cathedral, where the Bishop of Mayence performed High Mass. The first Bible printed by Gutenburg was displayed. What a field for reflection was here opened! The first Bible, in connexion with the imposing pageantries of Romanism—the Bible, in great part a sealed book to the body of the people—the service of God in a tongue unknown to the larger number of worshippers; but that first Bible, the germ of millions of Bibles that have spread the light of Christianity throughout all the habitable globe! When I considered that I was perhaps assisting in England, however humbly, to diffuse this light, I felt that new adaptations of the old instruments for advancing the great work of civilisation would arise, and again arise,—that the pen and the pencil would always create the fitting modes for reaching the minds of all—but that the cheapening of the means of knowledge had been for four centuries, and would always be, the one great principle which would never be laid aside.

Of the ceremonies attending the inauguration of the statue of Gutenburg, on the 14th of August, I saw very little. On my way thither, in company with my eldest daughter and her husband, I had

been bitten in the leg by a dog in an inn-yard at Ghent. We were detained at Brussels for a day by the ridiculous formalities attending the "visé" of our passports, without which we could not proceed. Here I fell into the hands of a physician, whose surgical skill consisted in saying "Ce n'est rien," and sending me to travel on with a camphor lotion. At Mayence, on the morning of the festival, I painfully crept out of bed with a leg greatly inflamed, saw the ceremony in the cathedral, and then travelled back to Cologne by slow stages. Here, in a river-side inn, I passed three or four sleepless nights, for the people were marching about with music and torches, and the cry of "Gutenburg, Gutenburg," came upon my ears till I was weary of the name. Fortunately I here met with a skilful Prussian surgeon; the inflammation was reduced. I know not that I ever felt more satisfied with medical treatment than when the kind doctor said to mine host, "Bring a bottle of the best wine in your cellar, and to-morrow you may wish my patient a good journey."

Upon the completion of the "Pictorial Bible," I embarked somewhat boldly in other illustrated works. That field was then almost exclusively my own. "Palestine" was the title of a new work undertaken by Mr. Kitto. It embraced the history of the Jews from the most remote ages to the period of their dispersion, and the physical geography and the natural history of the Holy Land. The editor of the "Pictorial Bible" had now found his true vocation, and he continued to labour upon biblical subjects for me and for other publishers to the end of his life. Some of the circumstances of that most interesting life have already been glanced at by me. They have been

detailed by himself with a sincerity at once manly and modest in his little volume "The Lost Senses." He has there told how on a day of 1817—"the last of twelve years of hearing and the first of twenty-eight years of deafness"—having ascended to the top of a ladder, and being in the act of stepping from it on to a roof which his father was slating, he lost his footing and fell backward into the paved court below. Very touching is his retrospect of that one moment of time which wrought in him a greater change of condition than any sudden loss of wealth or honours ever made in the state of man. He says, "Wealth may be recovered, and new honours won, or happiness may be secured without them; but there is no recovery, no adequate compensation, for such a loss as was on that day sustained. The wealth of sweet and pleasurable sounds with which the Almighty has filled the world,—of sounds modulated by affection, sympathy, and earnestness—can be appreciated only by one who has so long been thus poor indeed in the want of them, and who for so many weary years has sat in utter silence amid the busy hum of populous cities, the music of the woods and mountains, and, more than all, of the voices sweeter than music, which are in the winter season heard around the domestic hearth."

But John Kitto had his compensations in a future position of honour to himself, which brought with it the feeling that it had been won by earnest labour for the benefit of his fellow-men.

"The Thousand and One Nights"—commonly known as the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments"—was a new translation from authentic Arabic originals, by Mr. Edward Lane. To those who knew that most

popular book, which we had derived from the French translations,—it might in some cases be said from the inventions of Galland,—the changes in Mr. Lane's work from the familiar inaccuracies of "genii" to "jin," and of "divan" to "dewaun," with fifty others of the same character, must have proved a stumbling block. Loud, too, was the complaint that Aladdin and his Lamp and the Forty Thieves were not to be found in these volumes. But there was here to be found, not a feeble and uncharacteristic style diluted out of affected French, but a bold and simple rendering of Eastern modes of expression, often reminding us of our translation of the Bible. During the progress of this work I had opportunities of cultivating Mr. Lane's acquaintance. From long residence in Cairo, his habits were those of the Orientalist, which he could scarcely lay aside even when he brought the accomplishments of an English gentleman into the best society of London. Soon after his return from the East, I sat next to him at a dinner-table when he whispered to me, "I cannot endure these chairs. I will tuck my legs under me and then I shall be comfortable." However repellant to desultory readers might have been Mr. Lane's version, it was soon discovered that no other "Arabian Nights" would meet the wants of those who really desired to understand Oriental customs and forms of speech, and was worthy of the admiration of educated persons. But its instant popularity, as well as its permanent utility, was commanded by the designs of William Harvey—the most faithful as well as the most beautiful interpreters of the scenery and costume of the stories. The artist worked with the assistance of the author's mind, and the result

was to produce an illustrated book which is almost without a rival.

The "Pictorial History of England" occupied seven years in a regular monthly course of publication. It bore upon its title-page that it was produced "By George L. Craik and Charles MacFarlane, assisted by other Contributors." Four out of its eight volumes carried the narrative to the conclusion of the reign of George the Second. The other four volumes comprised only the reign of George the Third. This disproportion was fatal to the success which might have been anticipated if the whole work had been confined within as reasonable limits as the narrative of eighteen centuries, which preceded that of the latter half century. Mr. MacFarlane had undertaken the larger department of civil and military history. The history of religion, of literature, and of commerce, could not have been better confided than to Mr. Craik. In his history of the constitution he was occasionally assisted by Mr. Andrew Bisset, who has recently given an evidence that his characteristic views upon historical questions are unchanged. Sir Henry Ellis, my old and valued friend, lent some aid to the literature of the Saxon Period. The subject of the Arts was in the hands of an eminent architect, Mr. Edward Poynter, whose various accomplishments extended beyond the range of his own profession. Mr. Weir, who subsequently became the Editor of the "Daily News," wrote some graphic chapters on manners in the time of the third George. But upon Mr. MacFarlane rested the chief burden of this elaborate work. In the early half of its chronological divisions the subsidiary chapters rendered the historical narrative less difficult for one

writer to manage. For the work, like that of Dr. Henry, was broken up into separate divisions. I came subsequently to the conviction that this was not the true plan upon which a history of England ought to be conducted. "It may be convenient to a writer to treat of a period under distinct heads, such as those adopted by Dr. Henry—Civil and Military; Ecclesiastical; Constitution; Learning; Arts; Commerce; Manners;—but such an arrangement necessarily involves a large amount of prolixity and repetition. The intervals, also, at which the several divisions occur in works so conducted are much too long; for, in a century and a half, or two centuries, social changes are usually so great, that the Laws, Learning, Arts, and Customs at the beginning of such a period have little in common with those of its conclusion." * What was convenient to one writer was a far greater convenience in a history upon which many writers were employed. The plan worked well to the end of the fourth volume. Mr. MacFarlane had a considerable power of narration. He dealt more with military than with civil history, and in this his merit was conspicuous, for, by nature or by study, he had acquired a very competent notion of the military art. Upon paper he "could set an army in the field," and "the division of a battle" well understood. But in other respects he had not the prime quality of the historian, impartiality. He was essentially a partizan. He did not run riot upon vexed questions of past times. He was moderate in his estimate of the virtues of Charles the First,

* "Popular History of England." By Charles Knight. Vol. I. Introduction.

and would not have broken a lance in maintaining the purity of Mary Queen of Scots. But when he came to the French Revolution, then he was for "whole volumes in folio," that he might dwell upon its countless abominations, and say no word about the mighty changes which it was destined to produce upon the condition of the mass of society. He was a most agreeable companion, and an affectionate though not a safe friend. Had I been less attached to him I might, at all risks, have stopped the publication after the disproportion of the latter volumes had been manifested. But it is difficult for a publisher to adopt such a course in a serial work, even if his interest called upon him to be despotic. He is in the hands of others; and he must assent to their completion of the task which they had begun. To go on is dangerous; but to halt midway would be destruction.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHEN I had entered upon the publication of pictorial works, which had become a marked feature of my business, I was naturally led, as one serial approached its completion, to look around me for its fit successor. The Bible, the History of England, were books of universal interest, in which I could carry out my plan of rendering wood-cuts real illustrations of the text, instead of fanciful devices—true eye-knowledge, sometimes more instructive than words. There was one large subject capable of such treatment. It was once the fashion to illustrate Pennant's "London" with prints of every age and character. There could be no want of authentic materials for such a book as I contemplated.

Many descriptions of the great capital, whose past history is as interesting as its present state, had appeared at various periods. In the age of Elizabeth, John Stow published his "Survey of London, conteyning the originall, antiquity, increase, moderne estate and description of that citie." The worthy citizen of London has been fortunate in the eulogy of his modern editor, William J. Thoms, who to the learning of the antiquary unites the graces of the accomplished writer. Well has he said in his introductory notice, "If it were given to the reader to wield for a brief space the staff of Prospero, with

power to conjure up a vision of London as it existed in some former period, there can be little doubt but that he would so employ his art that the London of Shakspeare should stand revealed before him. Happily, although Prospero's staff is broken, the conjurations of the mighty magic necessary to call up this busy pageant were lodged in the untiring pen of honest John Stow." In the latter years of the Commonwealth, James Howell published his "Londinopolis; Historical Discourse and Perlustration of London." This is the city in which Milton had dwelt, as a boy, beneath his father's roof in Bread Street, to the time of his death in 1674, a blind old man. Then came laborious antiquaries to delve amongst registers and tomb-stones, with a taste far inferior to the historians who had gone before them. There was a field open to the light essayist; and Leigh Hunt made a very pleasant but very imperfect book of literary gossip about authors and players. As a subject for a pictorial book of some extent, I decided upon publishing "London" in weekly numbers. It was commenced in 1841; it was finished in 1844. I undertook the general conduct of the work. I had valuable contributors in Mr. Craik, Mr. Saunders, Mr. Weir, Mr. Platt, Mr. Dodd, Mr. Planché, and Mr. Fairholt. I adopted the plan of giving the names of the authors of each paper in a table of contents of the several volumes. The proportions in which each contributed to a work extending to two thousand five hundred pages will thus be seen. Instead of dwelling upon the individual merits of the contributors, I shall here very briefly attempt to notice some of the aspects of the London of Queen Victoria, chiefly as

compared with its characteristics during centuries of change.

I believe I may claim to have given a title to the Thames which is now familiarly used, "The Silent Highway." I begin the first number with one of the most remarkable pictures of ancient manners which has been transmitted to us—Gower's description of Richard the Second being rowed in his stately barge, and calling to the poet, in his little boat, to come on board amongst the great lords and ladies of his suite. It was four hundred and fifty years ago when the minstrel and the monarch were together,

> "In Thames when it was flowing."

With the exception of some of the oldest portions of the Tower of London, there is scarcely a brick or a stone that can present a memorial of the City which Gower calls New Troy. We have to pass through the long reign of the watermen from the time of John Norman, the first Mayor of London, who was rowed to Westminster instead of riding, to the days when even the watermen had become a portion of the antiquities of London—the days of the Penny Steamboat. Equally remarkable are the contrasts between the circumstances of the times when London was without coaches—when no sound of wheels was heard but that of the cart labouring through the rutty ways—and those of the period when the hackney-coach, having flourished for two hundred years, was at last annihilated by the omnibus and the cab. But a revolution was impending, twenty years ago, whose issue no one can entirely foresee. In 1844 there were ten railway termini in London.

Their contemplated union by new lines may again change the whole system of internal communication, if the lords of the iron-way, who ruthlessly pierce our ant-hill, should leave the ants any ground in which they may burrow in peace.

We walk through the great thoroughfares. Where are the open shops in which, up to the time of Queen Anne, the vendible articles were exposed to the street without any barrier of glass? Very slow were the steps by which the windows of small squares were superseded by the magnificent sheets of plate-glass, which, in honour of the man who abolished the glass duties, might be called Peel's memorial. Commercial architecture, too, has wholly changed. The palatial buildings of London are now the city warehouses. The famous city houses of the old nobility and the merchant princes have been long since annihilated, with the exception of a few relics preserved for show. Not many of them remained at the beginning of the eighteenth century. If domestic Architecture flourished little amongst us until the days of club magnificence, neither has Sculpture done much for the adornment of the streets of London. There is some fatality about this matter. We cannot finish the Nelson Testimonial, which was nearly completed in 1844. We cannot add to the public statues of London—which consist of thirteen kings and queens, four warriors, and three or four statesmen—a single monument of those, who, dwelling within the metropolitan limits, have made our language immortal and universal—not one of her men of science, not one of her great artists, not a Newton, not a Reynolds.

The new public buildings that have sprung up

since the reign of George the Fourth were created rather by some imperative necessity than by a systematic design to make them worthy of the ancient seat of royalty and legislation, the great market of the world, and the centre of arts and learning. Thus, if the old Houses of Parliament had not been burnt down in 1834, we should have had no structure such as that produced by Mr. Barry, which, with some faults, may preserve the name of the architect for posterity, as the man who erected one grand monument in a somewhat tasteless age, even as Wren built St. Paul's in an age little famous for the cultivation of high art. In 1844, the buildings were far short of completion, but enough was done to show the general character of the edifice, and how worthily it would some day leave not a wreck behind of the miserable façade by which Soane deformed Westminster Hall. The present Post Office, completed by Smirke in 1830, was an absolute necessity for meeting that vast increase of business which could scarcely be carried on in the old buildings of Lombard Street. Large and convenient as it is, one of the departments—that of the Money Order—which has grown out of Penny Postage, is carried on in a separate building. In 1845, the old Montague House, which from 1753 had been our British Museum, was finally destroyed. The nation had desired that something larger and nobler should be erected than the building which, for half a century, had held little more than Sir Hans Sloane's collection, and the Cotton and Harleian MSS.—an edifice worthy to receive the Elgin Marbles, the Townley Gallery, and the King's Library. Our National Museum was commenced from the designs of Smirke,

in 1823. His portico was finished in 1845. Great have been the additions and changes during another twenty years. Priceless treasures are still crying for houseroom. What has been done is but an earnest of what remains to do, for there can be no limit as long as England wills that she shall not be behind other nations in securing the best trophies of civilization.

The restoration of a few of the old ecclesiastical buildings of London had indicated, in 1844, the growth of a reverence for our beautiful monuments of ancient piety. It is a feature, not only of an improved taste but of a higher spirit, that in this particular, and in the general respect for antiquity, we had thrown off the shackles that bound down the previous generation to erect structures of mere utility and to neglect most of the beautiful things that time had spared. The restoration of St. Mary Overies was completed about 1840, but it was with great difficulty that the exquisite Lady Chapel could be preserved, for the despotism of London traffic insolently demanded its removal. The genius of barbarism, in this case, was not triumphant. The restoration of the Temple Church was accomplished without any such differences. The work was altogether in the hands of educated men. But the revival of a taste for Gothic architecture had, in some respects, a fatal influence upon the character of the new churches of London, as upon those that were springing up in every diocese. They were something better than the bald specimens of Georgian architecture, but they were to a great extent servile imitations of buildings characteristic of another form of worship. Happily the mistakes were gradually corrected, and it began

to be perceived that a modern Gothic church might have some originality of adaptation, although parts had been derived from ancient examples.

The Old Spring-time in London, with its Maypoles and its Arthur's Show, its playing at bucklers and its maids dancing for garlands, had given place to the chimney-sweepers; and they were fast fading into obscurity when the Legislature substituted long brooms for climbing boys. A quarter of a century ago we were complaining that the healthful enjoyments of the great body of the people were not sufficiently cared for in our Parks and public walks. Happily the age of exclusiveness is passed. We form new Parks on the East and on the South of London, amidst crowded populations, who, most of all, want fresh air. The old aristocratic haunts are become places of recreation for the commonalty, where they linger under the branching elms, or wander through trimly kept paths, bordered with evergreens and summer flowers. There can be no better proof that the people are cared for, than in the revival of fountains in the crowded thoroughfares. The conduits of the Tudor days are gone. The toiling housewife no longer fills her pitcher at the lion's mouth of the sculptured column. The water-carriers are extinct. But private benevolence has furnished the great city with the means of offering a cup of water to the thirsty pedestrian; and how acceptable is the gift may be seen every minute.

What stranger in the metropolis, taking up his lodging in or near the great thoroughfares, would now expect to hear any of those famous London Cries of which his father or his grandfather used so eloquently to discourse. All the poetical cries are

gone, with the exception of "Strawberries, ripe," which has survived since the days of Henry V. "Cherry ripe" was married two centuries ago to poetry, which became popular when it had gushed from the lips of Madame Vestris. The costermonger has monopolised all the old cries of radishes, onions, and cucumbers, but his loud voice is heard most in the suburbs. There the musical cries still linger. Cats'-meat is proclaimed in one district by a fine tenor voice, in remarkable contrast to the bawling of the costermonger. The tinkle of the muffin-man remains; but we can well spare the clang of the dustman's bell. The itinerant traders necessarily become scarcer amidst the growth of shops in every new district. So it is with the old street sights. Punch survives. The acrobat occasionally spreads his carpet in a *cul-de-sac*, but the raree-showman is no more. Italian boys have their white mice and their monkeys, but the dancing bear belongs to the dim antiquity of the age of George III. The mountebanks long survived the public-spirited artist of Hammersmith, described by the "Spectator" with a keen relish of the impudent fellow's wit. No Merry Andrew now vends his nostrums in the streets. We must now take the physic without the jest. Advertisements have superseded the harangues of the quack doctor, and thus Morrison's Pills and Old Parr's Life Pills are not defrauded of their fair fame by the want of trumpeters.

A witty friend eulogising porter exclaimed, "Always drink it out of pewter; never drink it out of the Bills of Mortality." The commentator must explain what is meant by the Bills of Mortality. They were the weekly Death Registers of a time

when the Londoners were exceedingly sensitive about any increase in the average number of deaths, for such increase was considered as a sign that the plague was in the crowded city, and those who could afford it fled terror-stricken. These bills were commenced in 1592, and went regularly on until 1842. The districts in which the parish clerks, with a band of matrons called searchers, performed the functions of registration were "within the Bills of Mortality." The "true bills" of the parish clerks were necessarily imperfect, and wholly unscientific. In January, 1840, the reports under the Registration Act were commenced, and we are now fully able to appreciate the great impulse to sanitary reforms, which has been given by such enlightened chronicles as those which issue from the office of the Registrar-General. The old reports of the Bills of Mortality were connected with the system of London burials. The horrible abuse of pestilent graveyards in the heart of the densest population has come to an end. Ever honoured be that Committee of the House of Commons, which, in their report of 1842, described the state of things which the Londoners had long endured as "an instance of the most wealthy, moral, and civilised community of the world, tolerating a practice and an abuse which has been corrected for years by nearly all other civilised nations in every part of the globe." The year 1844 saw the beginning of a reformation in London, which, in twenty years, has been fully accomplished. The example has gradually spread over the whole country. Churches and churchyards have ceased to offend our senses and endanger our lives. "The house appointed for all living" has become a place of decency and sometimes

of beauty, in accordance with the true spirit of religion, which sees nothing odious in death.

Cobbett called the great city the Wen, and he denounced with his utmost vigour the all-devouring maw which swallowed up the corn and cattle raised by the labour of the country. He knew perfectly well—especially when upon his farm of Botley he raised precocious lambs for the London market—that the wonderful adjustment of the demand and supply was the best proof of the healthy condition of the system of exchange under which town and country were equally thriving. Since Cobbett wrote, what changes have been wrought in the supply of food for London! The Corn Exchange, rebuilt in 1827, is now but an imperfect type of the enormous transactions which mark the era of Free Trade as compared with that of Protection. During this epoch, when the lean beasts of the Continent had come to be fattened in our rich pastures, and the farmers of England have learnt that their profits did not wholly depend upon the high price of wheat, the old Smithfield has vanished. Corporate prescription long clung to its abominations. They are gone. A far more convenient cattle-market in the northern suburb has freed our streets from the terrors of over-driven oxen; and the time is fast approaching when beastly slaughter-houses beneath the shadow of St. Paul's will give place to cleanly abattoirs outside the town. Billingsgate is a changed place. Amongst the blessings bestowed on communities by steam navigation and railways, the rapid supply and the consequent cheapness of fish is not the least important. It is the same with the wonderful supply of fruit and vegetables to Covent Garden. But the material changes

in this famous market are equally remarkable. About 1830, Mr. Walker, a metropolitan magistrate, wrote: "What must necessarily be the moral state of the numerous class constantly exposed to the changes of the weather, amidst the mud and putridities of Covent Garden? What ought it to be, where the occupation is amongst vegetables, fruits, and flowers, if there were well-regulated accommodations?" The evil was not long without a remedy. The present market is ample and convenient for all wholesale transactions. The centre arcade, in the spring and summer season, presents a sight unsurpassed by any capital in Europe, testifying to the perfection which the gardens and hot-houses of England have attained since Maitland, one of the dullest of London topographers, in describing Covent Garden as a magnificent square, says, "wherein, to its great disgrace, is kept a herb and fruit market." But if the London food-markets have changed, greater is the change in the public places where food is consumed. The old coffee-houses of the days of Addison are no longer frequented by beaux and wits. They are either extinct, or have become common eating-houses. But something much better for human happiness than "White's" and "The Grecian" have sprung up in London within the last quarter of a century. It was given in evidence before a Committee of the House of Commons in 1840, that there were eighteen hundred coffee-shops in London where the artizan might take his breakfast with comfort and even with luxury. John Wilson Croker, about this time, was correcting a proof at a printing-office on the Surrey side, when he found that he wanted his breakfast. There was no tavern or hotel near, so he boldly said he would

try one of the new coffee-shops. He came back marvellously impressed with a fresh aspect of society. He had breakfasted, for fourpence, as well as ever in his life ; everything was clean ; the behaviour of the company was of the best; and he had read the "Times" of that morning, and had seen the last Quarterly well thumbed. Mr. Humphries, a coffee-shop keeper, told the Committee of the House of Commons that since he had been in business a manifest improvement had taken place in the taste for literature amongst the classes who frequented his house. But at this period there was a marked deficiency in the London arrangements for public refreshment. There was no place, for example, where a lady, fatigued perhaps by a railway journey, could obtain a luncheon better than the bun and the indigestible meat-pie of the pastrycook. She could not obtain a glass of wine unless she chose to pay for a private room at a tavern, and be charged an extortionate price for a biscuit and a glass of sherry. The magic wand of the Chancellor of the Exchequer has changed all this. There is scarcely a pastrycook's where a chop cannot be procured, and, most wonderful, the monopoly of the inn-keeper has been destroyed, and wine for the sustentation of nature may be sold in the smallest quantity without incurring the old penalties of the excise.

Some of the social changes of London are indicated by the altered character of its amusements. Ranelagh disappeared in 1805. Vauxhall was still brilliant with its variegated lamps and its fireworks not ten years ago. But the glories of the place now abide only in the pages of Addison, and Goldsmith, and Walpole. The Mahomedan Paradise — where Sir Roger de

Coverley heard the chorus of birds that sung upon the trees, and looked upon the loose tribe of people who walked under their shade—had become more genteel when Lady Caroline Petersham debarked at Vauxhall, picked up Lord Granby very drunk, and seven chickens were minced into a china dish, which the lady stewed over a lamp. The arcades of Vauxhall have perished. The concert is no longer performed under the auspices of the statue of Handel. The glee-singers now render Canterbury Hall, and fifty other metropolitan saloons, somewhat refined amidst tobacco-smoke and brandy-and-water. These, too, will give place to some new form of social life, as Cremorne has driven out Vauxhall. But the memories even of these fleeting things will survive, for there was never an age of London in which the shifting aspects of its many-coloured life have not been reflected by its poets and its essayists. London has sent forth its literature through four centuries to the uttermost ends of the earth, and is full, therefore, not only of material monuments of the past, but of the more abiding memorials which exist in imperishable books. Thus the Tabard Inn, at Southwark, had in the reign of Victoria become a waggoners' yard, with its accompanying liquor-shop and tap-room. But Chaucer's immortal picture of "that hostelrie" and its guests remained to us. East Cheap had lost all its ancient characteristics in the improvements of London Bridge, but Lydgate showed us that, long before the days of Shakspere,

"*There* was harp, pipe, and minstrelsy."

Finsbury and Islington were covered with interminable rows of houses, but Ben Jonson called to mind

"the archers of Finsbury, or the citizens that come a-ducking to Islington ponds." The Devil Tavern, with its Apollo Club, had perished, but Jonson's verses over the door of the Apollo Room still gave it life. The River Fleet no longer ran across Holborn, but Pope recalled that polluted stream—

> "Than whom no sluice of mud
> With deeper sable blots the silver flood."

Since Pope wrote of this ditch, the sluices of mud have made the silver flood a leaden one. The glories of "White's," and "Will's," and "The Grecian," and "The St. James's," had passed away, in the fall of Coffee-houses and the rise of Clubs, but we yet live in the social life of the days of Anne, and people the solitary Coffee-houses with imaginary Swifts and Addisons and Steeles, even as Thackeray has called them again from the neglected "Tatlers" and "Spectators." The literary memorials of London are amongst her best antiquities.

The materials for judging of the social aspects of the metropolis a quarter of a century ago, are chiefly to be found in the Periodical Literature of that time; as the social aspects of the century previous are to be traced in the magazines and reviews which had started into existence in the time of George II. Even the "Penny Magazine," although rarely dealing with matters of temporary interest that belonged rather to newspapers, occasionally touched upon passing manners. The number of December 30th, 1837, is occupied by an article entitled "London Extremes —Hyde Park and Rag Fair." To see Hyde Park in its full glory, according to this writer, he would select a fine dry Sunday of the spring time. The

eye-witness arrives at Hyde Park about four o'clock; the throng of carriages and horses seems to increase every minute, and becomes extreme about five o'clock. "Dukes, merchants, barristers, and bankers are all intermingled; parliament men on horseback—for Sunday is a *dies non* in the senate—bow to ladies whose figures and complexion make Frenchmen and Prussians talk with rapture of the beauties of England; tall footmen, shining in scarlet and lace, exchange knowing looks with smart diminutive tigers, in frock coats and top-boots, who cling behind bachelor-looking cabriolets. By-and-by an occasional carriage may be seen to break out of the circle, and disappear by one of the gates—for the hour of dinner draws nigh. At six o'clock there is a visible declension in the numbers; and after that time the bustle dies rapidly away." When another generation shall be turning over the countless heaps of newspapers and other weekly sheets to see what Hyde Park was in the spring of 1864, they will find that the fashionable carriages and elegant equestrians, male and female, have vanished from this resort on a Sunday in the season, as completely as the May-day observances, which Pepys thus preserves from oblivion in his diary of the 30th of April, 1661:—"I am sorry I am not at London to be at Hyde Park to-morrow morning among the great gallants and ladies, which will be very fine."

Hyde Park on a Sunday is now wholly given up to vulgar pedestrians—fashion shuns it. It is not genteel "to take the air on a Sunday." Fascinating apprentices ogle smart shop-girls. Change here rules supreme. Spread over the green sward a year or two ago were knots of people gathered round field-

preachers. As the evening closed in, the motley throng gradually cleared away. The sensible artisan and his wearied spouse wend their way back to their dwelling "in city close ypent," and the well-got-up shopman, who has been airing his hack in Rotten Row, takes the poor jade home to the stable-keeper.

"It is a long walk from Hyde Park to Rag Fair," says the "Penny Magazine" essayist. Such a place as Rag Fair, at the extreme east of London, is one of its antiquities. It certainly belongs to another condition of society. "Its glory," continues the "Penny Magazine," "like that of many other things of the olden time, waxes dim. It was otherwise when gentlemen wore huge wigs, gold and silver-laced suits, blue or scarlet silk stockings with gold or silver clocks; lace neckcloths; square-toed short-quartered shoes with high red heels and small buckles; very long and formally-curled perukes, black riding-wigs, and nightcap-wigs; small three-cornered hats, laced with gold or silver galloon, and sometimes trimmed with feathers; and, to crown all, the never-failing sword dangling at the heels." It was once the rival of Monmouth Street, whose fame survives in play and poem. To both of these marts many a faded dandy of his day, whose credit with the tailor was broken up, and many a poor coxcomb of pretension, trying to ape his superiors in externals, were fain to sneak. They were once a refuge for the broken-down, but not for the destitute. Even at a more recent period, when cloth became the general material for the coat, and velvet, silk, satin and embroidery, were reserved for court dresses, or waistcoats and breeches only, the dearness of cloth made these places a very great convenience to people of

limited means. But, now, thanks to machinery, and to that taste which has produced such a simplicity in male attire, nobody but the very poorest need resort to Rag Fair.

In 1844, the seed that had been broadcast over the land had produced a supply of Periodical Literature, far too great for such careful thrashing and winnowing as may be advantageously bestowed upon the early essayists and magazine writers, in any attempt to trace the characteristics of the age. The vast increase of this species of publication may be attributed in some degree to the excitement, whether for purposes of business or pleasure, that had grown out of rapid travelling, cheap postal communication, and many other circumstances that cause the journey of life to be performed at a quicker pace. Fragmentary reading was an inevitable result of the new condition of society. I thought it a vast increase of this species of literature, as compared with the era of high-priced books, when I published the following statements:—On Saturday, May the 4th, 1844, the number of weekly periodical works issued in London was about sixty. The monthly issue of periodical literature was unequalled by any similar commercial operation in Europe, there being two hundred and twenty-seven monthly works sent out on the last day of May, 1844, from Paternoster Row, in addition to thirty-eight works published quarterly. To complete this account of the commerce of the periodical press, I added the number of newspapers published in the United Kingdom, which amounted to four hundred and forty-seven. Of these seventy-nine were London newspapers.* In the days of the newspaper stamp,

* "William Caxton; a Biography." Postscript.

the number printed could be given with the utmost accuracy from the official returns. How vast has been the increase since the total change in our fiscal laws with regard to the press, was recently exhibited in some very curious estimates submitted to the House of Commons by Mr. Edward Baines. It is scarcely necessary to say that such estimates can only approximate to the truth, but they are valuable as far as they go; and I may hope in my subsequent volume to verify them by such inquiries as I have instituted at former periods of my working life as a publisher.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHEN, in the autumn of 1811, I was passing a happy month of business and pleasure at Cliefden, I had strolled into the woods one sunny afternoon with a little book in my pocket, that I had been recommended by my noble hostess to read. I sat down in a shady nook by the side of the crystal spring, which flowed into the Thames with a soft murmuring voice. The thin volume which I made an effort to read, lulled as I was into drowsiness by the exquisite repose of the scene around me, was "Remarks on some of the Characters of Shakespere," by Thomas Whately. It was written by the father of a clergyman who visited at Lady Orkney's—the Rev. Thomas Whately. He was vicar of Cookham, the village on the Berkshire bank of the river, which he subsequently made famous by his sagacious and successful attempts to uproot pauperism in the rural parish under his charge. The late Archbishop of Dublin was another son of the same Shaksperian critic. I think I may venture to say, that this eminent man had not fully imbibed the spirit of his father's book, when, in a preface to a new edition, he wrote: "I doubt whether Shakspere ever had any thought at all of making his personages speak characteristically." The Archbishop believed that Shakspere "drew characters correctly, because he *could not avoid it*." It is

beside my present purpose to controvert this opinion. My object is to show that through this volume something like a critical understanding of Shakspere first dawned upon me.

Mr. Whately's book is a parallel between the characters of Richard the Third and Macbeth. It is a fragment of a more extensive design. How qualified the writer was to execute such a project with judgment and taste, may be seen from his opening paragraph: "Every play of Shakspere abounds with instances of his excellence in distinguishing characters. It would be difficult to determine which is the most striking of all that he drew; but his merit will appear most conspicuously by comparing two opposite characters, who happen to be placed in similar circumstances—not that on such occasions he marks them more strongly than on others, but because the contrast makes the distinction more apparent; and of these, none seem to agree so much in situation, and to differ so much in disposition, as Richard the Third and Macbeth. Both are soldiers, both usurpers; both attain the throne by the same means, by treason and murder; and both lose it, too, in the same manner, in battle against the person claiming it as lawful heir. Perfidy, violence, and tyranny, are common to both; and those only, their obvious qualities, would have been attributed indiscriminately to both by an ordinary dramatic writer. But Shakspere, in conformity to the truth of history, as far as it led him, and by improving upon the fables which have been blended with it, has ascribed opposite principles and motives to the same designs and actions, and various effects to the operation of the same events upon different tempers.

Richard and Macbeth as represented by him, agree in nothing but their fortunes."

I may probably date from this period that I did not wholly surrender my judgment to the decisions of Dr. Johnson upon the merits of each play, as I had read them in some one of the earlier variorum editions. When he said of "Macbeth:" "It has no nice discriminations of character," I thought him somewhat hazy. When he wrote of "A Midsummer Night's Dream:" "Wild and fantastical as this play is, all the parts in their various modes are well written," I deemed this faint praise more offensive than the dictum of Mr. Samuel Pepys, who pronounced it the most insipid, ridiculous play that he had ever seen in his life. Surely the great moralist had no conception of the deep meaning of almost every word which Hamlet utters, when he says that his "pretended madness causes much mirth." If our current school of criticism afforded very little stimulus to my love of Shakspere, I certainly was not encouraged by the opinion of the only English historian with whom I was familiar. "Born," says David Hume, "in a rude age, and educated in the lowest manner, without any instruction either from the world or from books, a reasonable propriety of thought he cannot, for any time, uphold." I had met with a little volume of the Sonnets. How well do I remember portions of those mysterious, and therefore more bewitching productions, in association with solitary walks in my native forest. That little volume was a treasure to me, for I could not find the sonnets in the editions of the plays that were amongst my father's collection of books. Steevens had said: "We have not reprinted the Sonnets, &c., of Shak-

speare, because the strongest Act of Parliament that could be framed would fail to compel readers into their service." Bewildered as I thus was up to the time when I had reached man's estate, by the depreciating criticism of the poet whom I had approached with an uncritical feeling of love and reverence, it was a consolation to me at length to find that there was a higher school than that of the pedants, who maintained that Shakspere was without art and without learning. In 1815 was published Mr. Black's translation of Schlegel's "Lectures on Dramatic Literature." The study of these very quickly led me away from the blind guides that I might otherwise have followed. The causes which had more or less influenced the previous race of English critics, were sagaciously pointed out by this sensible foreigner. "It was, generally speaking, the prevailing tendency of the time which preceded our own, a tendency displayed also in physical sciences, to consider what is possessed of life as a mere accumulation of dead parts; to separate what exists only in connection and cannot otherwise be conceived, instead of penetrating to the central point, and viewing all the parts as so many irradiations from it. Hence, nothing is so rare as a critic who can elevate himself to the contemplation of an extensive work of art. Shakspere's compositions, from the very depth of purpose displayed in them, have been exposed to the misfortune of being misunderstood."

In 1837 I began to look about me for artistic materials adapted to a Pictorial Edition of Shakspere. At first view, the existing stores of illustrations seemed almost boundless. There were embellish-

ments to various editions from the time of Rowe, chiefly of a theatrical character, and, for the most part, thoroughly unnatural. The grand historical pictures of the Shakspere Gallery were not in a very much higher taste, furnishing a remarkable example how painters of the highest rank in their day had contrived to make the characters of Shakspere little more than vehicles for the display of false costume. There were a few valuable antiquarian illustrations, such as those given by Mr. Douce. Altogether, it became necessary for me to look carefully at the plays, to see whether the aid of art might not be called in to add both to the information and enjoyment of the reader of Shakspere, by representing the Realities upon which the imagination of the poet must have rested. There were the localities of the various scenes, whether English or foreign; the portraits of the real personages of the historical plays; the objects of natural history, so constantly occurring; accurate costume in all its rich variety. Whilst engaged in my search after such pictorial illustrations, a gentleman, who has since distinguished himself by his antiquarian knowledge, lent me his note-book, in which he had jotted down a somewhat large list of archæological subjects. This kindness of Mr. William Fairholt was of essential use to me. I very early put myself in communication with Mr. Poynter, who made for me a series of the most beautiful architectural drawings, which imparted a character of truthfulness to many scenes, which upon the stage had in general been merely fanciful creations of the painter. Mr. Harvey undertook to produce a series of frontispieces, which, embodying the realities of costume and other accessaries, would

have enough of an imaginative character to render them pleasing.

The foundations of my edition as an illustrated work of art being thus laid, I diligently applied myself to a critical examination of the text to be adopted. I procured a copy of the first folio, which was read aloud to me whilst I marked upon a copy of the common *trade edition*, all the variations that presented themselves. I found that no book could be more incorrectly printed than this booksellers' stereotyped volume. I subsequently expressed my belief that the text of Shakspere had not been compared with the originals carefully and systematically for half a century. Not only had words been changed by printers, but whole lines had been omitted. The punctuation of the received text was in the most confused state. Thus far, my way was clear to produce a pictorial edition with a more correct text, even if I absolutely relied upon the authority of the first folio compared with the quartos. Of these scarce morsels I could avail myself in Steevens' very accurate reprint. This accuracy I had tested by having the several plays which he thus reproduced, collated with originals in the British Museum. But then, a new difficulty arose. The conjectural emendations of the variorum editors were so numerous, that it was necessary that I should make up my mind as to their adoption or rejection. I had to decide upon many disputed readings; and for this it was essential to consult the great mass of separate commentary that had been published by the learned, the dull, and the conceited, during the century in which the critical study of Shakspere's text had been pursued by many competent and incompetent

writers. There was one man of my acquaintance, for whom I had a high regard—Mr. Thomas Rodd, the well-known bookseller of Great Newport Street—whose knowledge of the works which he sold went far beyond their title-pages. He enabled me to form a considerable collection of commentaries on Shakspere, ranging from Rymer and Dennis to Hazlitt and Coleridge. As I advanced in my Shaksperian studies, I found that my labours would not cease with the acquirement of a more intimate knowledge of all that had been written about the text, but that I must carefully examine the various opinions as to the order in which the plays of Shakspere were produced, unless I were implicitly to adopt the theories advocated in Malone's "Essay" on that very difficult subject. I was satisfied that much depended in coming to something like accurate conclusions as to the plays which belonged respectively to the poet's earlier period, his middle period, and his later period. The historical plays would necessarily follow in the order of the events of which they were the subject. But for the comedies and tragedies, I determined to print them in the order which I believed to be at least an approximation to the period of their composition.

After a year of preparation I issued my prospectus, in which I boldly declared that Shakspere demanded a rational edition of his performances, that should address itself to the popular understanding in a spirit of love, and not of captious and presumptuous cavilling. In the first number of my edition, containing the "Two Gentlemen of Verona," I made a distinct profession of faith in Shakspere, with a perfect knowledge that I should be assailed on many sides, but that I should call up hosts of

friends ready to shake off their allegiance to "the dwarfish commentators who are for ever cutting him down to their own size." I thus wrote in my introductory notice to this play: "We believe the time is past when it can afford any satisfaction to an Englishman to hear the greatest of our poets perpetually held up to ridicule as a sort of inspired barbarian, who worked without method, and wholly without learning. But before Shakspere can be properly understood, the popular mind must be led in an opposite direction; and we must learn to regard him, as he really was, as the most consummate of artists, who had a complete and absolute control over all the materials and instruments of his art, without any subordination to mere impulses and caprices,—with entire self-possession and perfect knowledge."

It was natural for many who had been bred in a reverence for the old school of criticism to consider me presumptuous in declaring my scepticism as to the authority of Steevens and of Malone. Probably, my new-born enthusiasm carried me somewhat too far. I accepted as a seasonable admonition a friendly letter from Mr. Rodd: "Notwithstanding all their squabbles among themselves and abuse of each other, the dulness of some and wildness of others, I consider them as a whole as a body of men who have rendered singular service to English literature. In their readings for illustration of his text, they have thrown great light upon our national history, antiquities and language, and been the means of calling into notice several good authors who had fallen into unmerited obscurity. Let me beg of you to tread more lightly over their ashes in future." But I was not likely, although I might modify my future ex-

pressions, to be diverted from my convictions that I had chosen the right path, however perplexed it might be. I had abundant encouragement in my course. Henry Nelson Coleridge wrote to me upon the appearance of my opening number: "It is at once a beautiful and instructive edition; indeed, the first in the country conceived in a right spirit." Mrs. Jameson, in a most welcome letter, expressed her entire sympathy with my opinions: "I thought I had well studied Shakspere myself, but your edition has opened fresh sources of reflection and information." My old friend, Sir Henry Ellis, proffered his assistance, and sent me a genuine slice of the mulberry-tree which he received from the Rev. Mr. Becket, and saw it cut from the block upon which Garrick had himself placed his seal. From Leigh Hunt I received a letter, from which I give an extract, very characteristic of the writer: "It rejoices me to see you in a task like this, because it enables you to live in a world which belongs to you besides the world of business, and which will do you as much good as I believe it will give pleasure and profit to the reader. To live with Shakspere, is to breathe at once the sweetest and most universal air of humanity." I could multiply these testimonies of kindness, were it not distasteful to me to appear like my own eulogist.

Offers of literary assistance in my undertaking reached me from various quarters. I had originally hoped for much direct aid, and had thought that my task would be lightened by having several persons engaged upon various departments. I found this idea, with two exceptions—music and costume—impossible of execution, even if I had not become

enamoured of my work, and had derived from it a solace amidst many cares. The labour had not wearied me when I had completed three-fourths of my undertaking. In a postscript to my sixth volume, I thus expressed my feelings: "It is now somewhat more than three years since I commenced the publication of 'The Pictorial Edition of Shakspere,' in Monthly Parts; and during that period I have produced a Part on the first day of each month, with one single exception. The task of editing this work has been to me a most agreeable one. It has been absorbing enough to require my daily attention,—to occupy my habitual thoughts,—to shut out dark forebodings,—to lighten the pressure of instant evils. It has furnished me a useful and honourable occupation, which has not been less zealously pursued because it was associated with the discharge of duties not so pleasurable. I have worked at this task with a full consciousness of the responsibility which lay upon me; but as I have worked in the spirit of love, that consciousness has never been painful."

The Two Gentlemen of Verona was printed for the first time in the folio of 1623. That volume also contained eight other comedies, three histories, and six tragedies, of which no previous edition is known. In addition to these eighteen plays, four other comedies were there first printed in a perfect shape. I had, therefore, ample reason for considering that first folio as standing with regard to half of Shakspere's plays in the same relation to the text as the one manuscript of an ancient author. It was the only accredited *complete* copy of four more of his choicest works. I, therefore, from the first, held that for three-fifths of Shakspere's plays that folio was

the only authority, however the quartos might be advantageously compared with its text with regard to the other two-fifths. I did not place an exclusive reliance, as I have often been accused of doing, upon the text of that folio, but I did not rely by preference upon those rare quarto morsels which the editors of the first folio had described as stolen and surreptitious copies. Within a week after the appearance of my first number, I had a letter from Mr. John Wilson Croker, which went to confirm me in my views with regard to the text. He says, "Let me tell you that many years ago (near forty I fear) I wrote a great many pages to establish the principle that you have adopted—the paramount authority of the first folio; and, as well as I can recollect, I went through the whole of Macbeth to prove my position. I know not whether my MS. is in existence, I rather fear not, as I have not seen it for near thirty years, but it may be in some boxes of old papers which are in a lumber room, and I will have it looked for. If I find it, and that it contains anything worth copying, you shall have it. Perhaps, also, I may be able now and then to give you some hints which may be worth your consideration." My old friend, Dr. Maginn, in a letter of the 15th of November, showed that he held the first folio in the same respect as I did myself, but was inclined to treat that and all other authorities with a licence that appeared to me somewhat dangerous: "I have not any Shakespeare collections by me, though I once made a considerable number of notes with a view of giving an edition, not of the kind you are publishing, but merely critical with reference principally to the state of the text. I consider with you the first folio to be in the nature of a

MS., and therefore to be kept always primarily in view, not of course neglecting the second folio, and the quartos; but having been reared in a school of criticism in which even MSS. themselves are used, not worshipped, I have no objection to wielding the hook in a manner which you would perhaps consider as slashing as that of Bentley himself."

Having thus taken up my position with regard to the text, I went on fearlessly and consistently. I preferred perhaps a little too exclusively the authority of the folio. I often adopted the text of a reliable quarto, always pointing out the discrepancies of the two editions. But I utterly rejected the principle of making a hash out of two texts, which had been the common practice of the variorum editors. To decide amidst various readings was really a much more difficult task a quarter of a century ago than it would be now, did the text remain precisely in the state in which it was when I began my labours. There did not then exist such a perfect, I might almost say such a wonderful help to memory as Mrs. Cowden Clarke's Concordance. Ayscough's Index was exceedingly imperfect and ill-arranged. The "Verbal Index" of Twiss—two rare volumes, which cost me three or four guineas—was a book that was to me a perpetual source of perplexity, for the references of a single word to a hundred different places, without the slightest key to its use and significance, led me into a labyrinth whose darkness it was impossible to penetrate. Honoured be the untiring industry and correct judgment of that lady, who came too late to assist me in my first edition, but who has ever since been my reliable aid whenever I was engaged in a critical study of Shakspere.

My continuous work had sometimes relief when questions arose which were of a more novel and exciting character than textual commentary or even æsthetical criticism. The Merry Wives of Windsor took me back into the old scenes of my childhood, which I retraced in companionship with one whose mind was as natural and genial as his landscapes are pure and truthful. Thomas Creswick and his wife spent a few weeks with us in a cottage at Salt Hill. A short walk took the painter with his sketch book, and the editor, with his unwritten knowledge of old familiar haunts, into Windsor, and there we might trace the misfortunes of Falstaff, as he was carried "in the name of foul clothes to Datchet Lane," and thence "slighted into the river where the shore was shelvy and narrow." "About the fields through Frogmore" suggested a stroll in another direction, to find a fit locality for the farm-house where Ann Page was "a feasting." The Windsor town of mediæval architecture was to be imagined, but the position of its streets with reference to the Castle could be well defined. Mr. Creswick's charming designs made the Merry Wives of Windsor the gem of the comedies in my edition. But as if Shakspere, the "gentle Shakspere," was to be always provocative of controversy, I became involved in the discussion of the very doubtful question whether Herne's Oak existed or had been cut down. The subject is stated so fully in my original edition, and, with some additional matter, in the revised issue of the Pictorial Shakspere now publishing, that it is scarcely necessary to add anything to my details of the evidence regarding the controverted points between Mr. Jesse and the "Quarterly Review," beyond printing here an extract

of a letter to me from Mr. Croker, of the 13th of January, 1842:—

"Your dissertation on Herne's Oak is conclusive against Mr. Jesse's fable, but there is one point of that fable, of the error of which you cannot be apprised. Mr. Jesse admits that George IV. frequently stated that 'George III. had cut down the tree supposed to be Herne's oak;' but that 'he always added *that it was not so*.' Now I was the person to whom George IV. told the whole story, and I told it, many years ago, to Mr. Jesse, to whom it was then new, and I can assert that George IV. never *added* anything like what Mr. Jesse has stated, but *quite the reverse*. I know not from whom else Mr. Jesse might afterwards have heard the story, nor with what additions; but his statement that George IV. *always* told the story with the addition in question, is assuredly not the fact, for he did not so tell it *me*, and Mr. Jesse first heard the story from me without any such addition. Mr. Jesse asked me to allow him to print my version of the story—not at that time stating that he had heard any other version—but this I refused, out of delicacy to George IV., who, I think, was still alive, and to the rest of the Royal family, for the fact is, that George IV. told me the story as a proof that his father's mental disorder had shown itself earlier than was generally known; and all the circumstances of the anecdote—and they are *very curious*—tended to show that this cutting down of the tree was an act of temporary derangement. So much for my share in Mr. Jesse's story. In 1838 George IV. and even William IV. were dead, and I thought I might, without impropriety, set the substance of the matter right in the 'Quarterly

Review,' which I did in the passage you have quoted."

During my editorial employment upon Twelfth Night, I was led into considerations with regard to Shakspere's domestic character by the perusal of Mr. De Quincey's Life of Shakspere in a Part of the "Encyclopædia Britannica" which had just then appeared. My logical friend had taken up the notion that a passage in Twelfth Night was a pathetic counsel of the poet in his maturest years "against the errors into which his own inexperience had been ensnared." He maintains that when the duke says to the pretended Cesario—

> "Then let thy love be younger than thyself,
> Or thy affection cannot hold the bent,"

Shakspere intends to notice the disparity of years between himself and his wife. Mr. De Quincey's theory that Shakspere's married life was one of unhappiness, was supported by the dictum of Malone in 1780, who first dragged a passage of Shakspere's Will into light, to prove that in this, his last solemn act, the wife of the rich player of Stratford had not wholly escaped his memory; but, as more strongly to mark how little he esteemed her, he had "cut her off, not indeed with a shilling, but with an old bed." Steevens considered the bequest of the second best bed as "a mark of peculiar tenderness," and assumed that she was provided for by a settlement. It certainly occurred to me that such conjectures and inferences were a mere waste of words. I had made what the critical solvers of historical puzzles call a discovery. Well do I remember the glee with which, having written the following paragraph, I show

it to my dear friend, Mr. Thomas Clarke, a sound lawyer, who confirmed my opinion, as fully as did Mr. Long and Mr. Hill, with whom I subsequently discussed the matter. "Shakspere knew the law of England better than his legal commentators. His estates, with the exception of a copyhold tenement, expressly mentioned in his will, were *freehold.* HIS WIFE WAS ENTITLED TO DOWER. She was provided for amply, *by the clear and undeniable operation of the English law.* Of the houses and gardens which Shakspere inherited from his father, she was assured of the life-interest of a third, should she survive her husband, the instant that old John Shakspere died. Of the capital messuage, called New Place, the best house in Stratford, which Shakspere purchased in 1597, she was assured of the same life-interest, from the moment of the conveyance, provided it was a direct conveyance to her husband. That it was so conveyed, we may infer from the terms of the conveyance of the lands in Old Stratford, and other places, which were purchased by Shakspere in 1602, and were then conveyed 'to the onlye proper use and behoofe of the saide William Shakespere, his heires and assignes for ever.' Of a life-interest in a third of those lands also was she assured. The tenement in Blackfriars, purchased in 1614, was conveyed to Shakspere and *three other persons,* and after his death was re-conveyed by those persons to the uses of his will, 'for and in performance of the confidence and trust in them reposed by William Shakespeare deceased.' In this estate, certainly, the widow of our poet had not dower."

In the postscript to Twelfth Night, I had said, adverting to a letter printed by Mr. Collier in his

"New Facts," "There was one who knew Shakspere well—who, illustrious as he was by birth and station, does not hesitate to call *him*, one of the poor players of Blackfriars, 'my especial friend'—who testifies decidedly enough to the public estimation of his domestic conduct." That letter purported to have been written in 1608 by Lord Southampton to Lord Chancellor Ellesmere. I must give another extract from Mr. Croker's correspondence with me on the subject of Shakspere, to show how carefully this friend watched my progress, and with what critical acumen he anticipated the objections of the present day to discoveries of this apocryphal character. "I observe you quote and rely upon the letter signed 'H. S.' discovered among Lord Ellesmere's papers by Mr. Collier. If that letter be genuine I must plead guilty to a great want of critical sagacity, for somehow it smacks to me of modern invention, and all my reconsideration of the subject, and some other circumstances which have since struck me, corroborate my doubts. Mr. Collier is, of course, above all suspicion of having any hand in a fabrication, but it appears that one person at least, and perhaps more, had access to the papers before him, though it would seem that the particular bundle appeared not to have been opened since it was first tied up. In short, I see such strong external evidence of authenticity, and, on the other hand, such internal evidence (in my judgment) of the contrary, that I am puzzled."

In the spring of 1841 I commenced the publication of "Knight's Store of Knowledge for all Readers"—a series of original treatises by various authors. It was issued in weekly numbers at two-

pence. The first and second numbers were devoted to Shakspere and his writings, and they bore my name as their author. At this period I had finished six volumes of the Pictorial Shakspere, and the seventh, consisting of the doubtful plays and poems, was being printed. I had not yet commenced writing the biography, but I had collected various materials for that object; had visited Stratford, and had inspected several documents preserved there. I was thus prepared to write the papers in the "Store of Knowledge," with many new materials, and a tolerably complete acquaintance with whatever had been published of this very obscure life. That this unpretending production of mine had supplied a want, I was assured in a letter which I have before me from John Sterling, written in February, 1842, when he was staying at Falmouth. He thanks me for the pleasure and instruction furnished by the first volume of my new edition of Shakspere—"The Library Edition," published on the 1st of January, 1842,—and he then adds, "I had previously read with great delight your convincing and comprehensive Life of the Poet in the 'Store of Knowledge.' I was charmed to find so much external evidence for a view which the study of his style—so richly *composite*—must have more or less obscurely suggested to all intelligent readers." The praise of such a man furnished ample encouragement to me to devote my best exertions to the completion of the "Biography" which I had announced. The outline in the "Store of Knowledge" embodied, with slight variations, the general view which I subsequently elaborated. As those papers have probably passed into oblivion, I shall here attempt a very brief analysis of the

portions in which I expressed my strong objections, or grave doubts, as to much that had been previously given to the world as the authentic facts of Shakspere's life. My discovery as to his wife's dower, had perhaps made me a little too sceptical—perhaps a little too rash, in regard to many of the stories embodied in the elaborate "Life of William Shakspeare," by Edmund Malone, which occupies nearly three hundred pages of the edition of 1821. I had carried that volume with me to Stratford in my first visit just noticed; and during my few days' sojourn there, had made many marginal notes, for the most part recording my first doubts of the received biographies. At the head of the section in which it is attempted to prove that Shakspere's father was an impoverished and dishonoured man, I find written, "It appears to me that all this may be pounded into nothing."

The first object which I proposed to myself, was to destroy the belief, first propagated by Aubrey, that his father was a butcher; that when he was a boy, he exercised his father's trade; but that when he killed a calf, he would do it in a high style and make a speech. This wonderful story the old antiquary had gathered from some of the neighbours. Betterton, the great actor (as we learn from the life by Rowe, prefixed to his edition of 1709) had ascertained that Shakspere's father was a considerable dealer in wool. Malone contends, upon the authority of a record of the proceedings in the Bailiff's Court, that he was a glover. All these contradictory statements were attempted to be reconciled by me by a quotation from Harrison's "Description of England," written at the precise time when Shak-

spere's father was known to possess landed property. "Men of great port and countenance are so far from suffering their farmers to have any gain at all, that they themselves become graziers, butchers, tanners, sheepmasters, woodmen, and *denique quid non,* thereby to enrich themselves, and bring all the wealth of the country into their own hands." It was important to show, if possible, that we might look at Shakspere as a well-nurtured child, brought up by parents living in comfort, if not in affluence. In the "Store of Knowledge," I expressed myself warmly upon this point: "His father and mother were, we have no doubt, educated persons; not indeed familiar with many books, but knowing some thoroughly; cherishing a kindly love of nature and of rural enjoyments amidst the beautiful English scenery by which they were surrounded; admirers and cultivators of music, as all persons above the lowest rank were in those days; frugal and orderly in all their household arrangements; of habitual benevolence and piety. We have a belief, which amounts to a conviction as strong as could be derived from any direct evidence, that the mind of William Shakspere was chiefly moulded by his mother. No writer that ever lived has in the slightest degree approached him in his delineations of the grace and purity of the female character; and we scarcely exaggerate in saying that a very great deal of the just appreciation of women in England has been produced through our national familiarity with the works of Shakspere. But a father's influence could not have been wanting in his culture."

In tracing the course of Shakspere's life with the conviction that "the child is father of the man," I

rejected the very doubtful evidence that the greatest amongst the minds of England had passed through early sorrow and suffering; had encountered the degradations of positive want; had fled his country for deer-stealing; had left his family to hold horses at the door of a London theatre. Nor did I believe that Shakspere had been bred an attorney, because his plays abound with legal phraseology. It was clear to me that he had not been in an attorney's office at Stratford, for Mr. Wheler, of that town—a solicitor of long standing, a diligent antiquary, a collector of every local fact regarding Shakspere—had told me that he had inspected hundreds of title-deeds and other documents bearing date from 1580 to 1590, in the hope to find William Shakspere's signature; and that, if he had been a lawyer's clerk in Stratford, or indeed in any neighbouring town, his signature must have been attached to some document as an attesting witness, that formality being then required on the slightest occasions.

The deer-stealing story was surrounded with so many absurd traditions that, however willing I might have been to accept it for the sake of that charming volume by Mr. Landor, "The Examination of William Shakspere," I could not but treat with absolute contempt the authority of a manuscript in the library of Corpus Christi, Oxford: "He (Shakspere) was much given to all unluckiness, in stealing venison and rabbits, particularly from Sir Lucy, who had him oft whipt, and sometimes imprisoned, and at last made him fly his native country, to his great advancement." Having at length got Shakspere out of his native town—in which, amidst all these pretended degradations, I was inclined to believe that he had

composed his Venus and Adonis—I find him a writer of plays in London. During the publication of the Pictorial Edition, I had repeatedly expressed my conviction that he became a dramatic author at a much earlier period than had been usually determined. All his critics and commentators had agreed that he whose mental powers were bestowed upon him in the extremest prodigality of nature, was of wonderfully slow growth towards a capacity for intellectual production. In some lucky hour, they maintained, when his genius was growing vigorous—that is at the age of twenty-seven—he produced a play. There was nothing extraordinary in Ben Jonson writing for the stage when he was only nineteen; but then Shakspere, you know, was an untutored genius, &c., &c. It is unnecessary here to enter upon any details connected with this question, which had furnished much of the most interesting matter in my Introductory Notices to many of the Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies. I believed that the first part of Henry VI. was written by Shakspere, and that it was his earliest dramatic production.

At the time of the publication of "The Pictorial Shakspere," the belief had gained ground that his Sonnets had not been sufficiently regarded as a store of materials for the biography of the poet. In 1838 Mr. Charles Armitage Brown had published a volume entitled "Shakespeare's Autobiographical Poems." He regards them "as pure uninterrupted biography." In the "Store of Knowledge," I had held that although in the Sonnets there are repeated expressions of thoughts and feelings strictly personal, it was impossible to receive them as a continuous expression of such thoughts and feelings. I then honestly con-

fessed the extreme difficulty of forming any decided opinion. About six months afterwards, I published in my Pictorial Edition, an "Illustration of the Sonnets." In this elaborate analysis I worked out my theory that the poems of Shakspere, which Meres had, in 1598, termed his "sugared sonnets" amongst his private friends, when published as "never before imprinted," in 1609, "were a collection of 'Sibylline leaves' rescued from the perishableness of their written state, by some person who had access to the high and brilliant circle in which Shakspere was esteemed; and that this person's scrap-book, necessarily imperfect and pretending to no order, found its way to the hands of a bookseller, who was too happy to give to that age what its most distinguished man had written at various periods, for his own amusement, and for the gratification of his 'private friends.'" My general belief was, that there are many circumstances connected with the mode in which the Sonnets were published, as well as in their internal evidence, to warrant us in receiving some as essentially dramatic, —that is, written in an assumed character; and some as strictly personal,—expressing the thoughts and feelings of the man William Shakspere. Though the Sonnets are personal in their form, it is not therefore to be assumed that they are all personal in their relation to the author.

I commenced the composition of "William Shakspere, a Biography," at Stratford-upon-Avon, in the summer of 1842. The first book, comprising about half the volume, was published in November of that year. This portion embraces the scanty materials for a life of Shakspere properly so called, up to the period when he left Stratford to enter upon his dra-

matic career in London. But I endeavoured to associate Shakspere with the circumstances around him, in a manner which might fix them in the mind of the reader by exciting his interest. I might have accomplished the same end by somewhat extending the notice in the "Store of Knowledge," accompanied by a History of Manners and Customs, a History of the Stage, &c., &c. The form of my biography might appear fanciful. It has been called by a prosaic critic a burlesque. But the narrative essentially rested upon facts, and if criticism required me to move in the old tramway, I was content to have chosen a byway more circuitous, but probably more pleasing.

The month which I spent with my family at Stratford was one of real enjoyment. My friend William Harvey came down to complete some sketches which he had made in the previous summer, and we went together over all the ground which Shakspere may be supposed to have trodden in childhood, in youth, and in middle age. We examined all the memorials of the Elizabethan period in Stratford, the house in Henley Street, the Grammar School, the Chapel of the Guild, the neighbouring villages, and especially Shottery. We went to Kenilworth and Coventry, to Guy's Cliff and Warwick. We followed the descent of the Avon to Bidford and to Evesham. We traced its upward course to Charlecote and Hampton Lucy. I wrote a very little, but my mind was completely filled with the matter upon which I had to write.

With a purpose of collating some of the rare quartos in the Bodleian, we moved from Stratford to Oxford. Here I pursued, in the charming silence of that noble Library, my double duty of collation and

composition. It was the Long Vacation. I could not have found a more exquisite residence for two months—one more calculated to surround me with fitting associations, than these venerable buildings, when their courts were little visited by human tread, and these exquisite gardens, in which we might pass the long afternoons in almost perfect solitude. Within a few months I had to describe Shakspere as halting at Oxford on his first journey to London. I wrote, "So noble a place, raised up entirely for the encouragement of learning, would excite in the young poet feelings that were strange and new. He had wept over the ruins of religious houses; but here was something left to give the assurance that there was a real barrier against the desolations of force and ignorance. A deep regret might pass through his mind that he had not availed himself of the opening which was presented to the humblest in the land, here to make himself a ripe and good scholar. Oxford was the patrimony of the people, and he, one of the people, had not claimed his birthright. But, on the other hand, as he paused before Balliol College, he must have recollected what a fearful tragedy was there acted some thirty years before. Was he sure that the day of persecution for opinions was altogether past? Men were still disputing everywhere around him; and the slighter the differences between them, the more violent their zeal. They were furious for or against certain ceremonial observances; so that they appeared to forget that the object of all devotional forms was to make the soul approach nearer to the Fountain of wisdom and goodness, and that He could not be approached without love and charity."

In May, 1843, I was on my way to Edinburgh, for the purpose of investigating this curious problem; "Did Shakspere visit Scotland?" On Monday, the 22nd, I was about all the morning seeing the noble city. My guide was William Spalding, a man of distinguished ability, extensive knowledge, and of a most amiable nature. He and his friend Mr. Hill Burton devoted themselves to my aid with a most unremitting kindness and assiduity, assisting me in the inspection of various documents in the Library of the Advocates. They had each been contributors to the "Penny Cyclopædia." Mr. Spalding had corresponded with me upon Shakspere subjects. In the Part of the Pictorial Edition in which I had given an analysis of the "Two Noble Kinsmen," I had, in April, 1842, noticed with genuine approbation, as it deserved, Mr. Spalding's work on the authorship of that play. His production had earned the commendation of Hallam and of Jeffrey. Yet he wrote to me, with singular modesty, "I feel particularly obliged by the kind forbearance which you have evinced in alluding to that which is one of the worst faults in my little book—namely, the undue predominance given to matters of style, and the imperfect appreciation of broader views of dramatic composition. The pamphlet was written when I was but beginning to struggle for emancipation from that *verbal* school of criticism in which my first training had been received; and I have long been so fully and painfully sensible of this and other heavy defects in the treatise, that I have taken up and destroyed the unsold copies of the small edition." Whilst at Edinburgh I saw Hawthornden, as well as I could under constant rain and mist. I had some

pleasant dinners with Professor Wilson; with Mr. Maclaren, the editor of the "Scotsman;" and with Mr. Boyd. I had a constant welcome at all times from Mr. Spalding, with whom I contracted an intimate friendship. "Wilson," I wrote home, "was exceedingly kind. He is grown old, but full of the young poetry of his nature." I did not see the sun during the four or five days I was in Edinburgh. As I was going away the veil of mist was lifted off the glories of the city for the first time. My Shaksperian discoveries were not of much importance; but they formed the ground-work of some conjectural matter in the "Biography," not without interest for the general reader.

I went on to Glasgow, and was received with all kindness by Mr. John Kerr, whose acquaintance I had made some years before. He had an excellent library, was thoroughly well read upon all antiquarian and topographical subjects, and could probably give me as much information as any man upon the subject of my inquiry. What special knowledge I did obtain, and what theories I founded upon it, may be seen in my volume of "Biography." From some information Professor Wilson gave me, I found out De Quincey, who was in hiding in Glasgow. He looked better than he had done twelve years before, but he had a beard a foot long (an unusual appendage to the face of an Englishman twenty years ago), the cultivation of which, he said, was necessary to his health. Nothing could exceed the affection with which he received me. It was the last time I saw him.

In looking over the letters which I have preserved in connection with my Shaksperian labours,—from some of which I have unreservedly quoted,—the fea-

tures, the intellectual qualities, the moral characteristics, of most of the writers come before me as things of the past, and I repeat again and again the touching opening of a beautiful little poem by James Montgomery—

> "Friend after friend departs;
> Who hath not lost a friend?"

What recollections of kindness must I ever associate with the names of Henry Nelson Coleridge, who was the first to encourage me in the task I had undertaken; of his admirable wife, who conveyed to me her husband's remembrances from that bed of sickness from which he never rose; of Leigh Hunt; of John Wilson Croker; of Crofton Croker; of William Maginn; of Thomas Hood; of kind-hearted John Britton; of Allan Cunningham; of Thomas Rodd; of Mrs. Jameson; of John Sterling; of William Spalding. The memories of some of these will be preserved in more durable notices than mine; but few living men can look back upon a personal intercourse with any of those I may thus claim as friends with a truer esteem—in some cases with a warmer affection. One there was—not a man of letters, but of cultivated mind—who took the warmest interest in my "Shakspere," as he did in all my undertakings. Thomas Clarke, who, at the time of his death, filled the honourable post of Solicitor to the Board of Ordnance, was such a friend as a man has rarely by his side in the world's struggles. Whilst I write, another has passed away, whose especial solicitude for my well-doing, and whose never-failing kindness, originated in his admiration of Shakspere. Andrew Mortimer Drummond, of the great banking-house, was a man to be loved.

CHAPTER XV.

THE "Penny Cyclopædia" was finished in twenty-seven volumes, in the spring of 1844. The notion of a Supplement had not then been matured. The work was deemed complete, as far as the efforts of the editor and his contributors could keep pace with the rapid march of invention, the improvements of legislation, and the onward rush of every department of knowledge. It is in the very nature of such works that they must be to some extent imperfect. Not Argus with his hundred eyes could note down all the metamorphoses of Time, the great magician, as *he* calls them into life.

Soon after the close of this labour of eleven years, I received an honour upon which I look back as one of my unalloyed "Pleasures of Memory." It comes before me now with the vagueness of an agreeable dream. To give some precision to my recollections, a friend transcribed for me, from the vast file of newspapers in the British Museum, some paragraphs from those of June, 1844. I will give one from the "Athenæum" of the 15th of that month: "Change is our order—the order of the nineteenth century; and, in marking progress, we may record here that authors and publishers seem about to 'handy-dandy,'—and that the contributors to the 'Penny Cyclopædia,' and some personal friends,

have given Mr. Charles Knight a sumptuous entertainment at the Albion Tavern, on the completion of that work." The word "handy-dandy" may send my readers to their Shakspere :—"Change places, and handy-dandy, which is the justice, which is the thief?" This were an unsavoury allusion to the change indicated above; if there were any meaning intended. But perhaps the "Athenæum" had turned to Todd's "Johnson," and had there found this definition: "A play amongst children, in which something is shaken between two hands, and then a guess is made in which hand it is retained." There was little of the material reward of industry to be retained in my palm had it been ever so "itching;" and this my "authors" knew. But when one individual amongst "publishers" received such an unusual compliment as was bestowed upon me, I trust that I may regard the circumstance in the spirit of the "Athenæum"—as "marking progress" in the relations between two classes that were generally considered natural enemies, but whose interests are identical and ought never to be separated.

Upon reflection, I do not think it would be seemly in me to present my own recollections of the circumstances attending this dinner. Nor could I faithfully do so. I was at once joyous and frightened in my novel position. As to remembering what I said myself, in returning thanks, it comes before me "like a tangled chain." One thing I recollect. I quoted from Joan of Arc's speech in Henry VI.

> "Glory is like a circle in the water,
> Which never ceaseth to enlarge itself,
> Till by broad spreading it disperse to nought."

And then I ejaculated "not so knowledge."

But I must give some relation of this dinner; and I therefore blend portions of the reports of "The Times" and the "Morning Chronicle," without any deviation of phrase.

"On the suggestion of several eminent persons, it was proposed to give an entertainment to Mr. Knight, in celebration of the successful completion of the "Penny Cyclopædia," and to express their sense of the value and usefulness of the literary undertakings in which he has been engaged as editor or publisher. Accordingly a large party met on Wednesday evening at the Albion Tavern.

"The Chair was taken by Lord Brougham; and amongst the company assembled were Lord Wrottesley, the Rev. Mr. Jones the tithe commissioner, Mr. Bellenden Ker, Mr. John Lefevre, Mr. Parkes, Professor Key, Professor Long, Mr. M. D. Hill, Mr. Christie, M. P., Mr. Chadwick, Mr. Porter of the Board of Trade, and a host of literary and scientific gentlemen, as well as influential individuals connected with the publishing world.

"Lord Brougham, in proposing the health of Mr. Knight, dwelt on the various services which, in connection with the Useful Knowledge Society, he had been enabled to render towards the advancement of society in moral as well as intellectual knowledge; pointed out especially the great service he did to the state in writing and publishing his two little works, "The Rights of Industry" and "The Results of Machinery"—two publications which, at a time of great public excitement, were eminently conducive to allaying the reckless spirit which, in 1830, was leading multitudes to destroy property and break up machines. He also pointed out what Mr. Knight

had done in editing and illustrating Shakspere; in the projection and carrying on of the 'Penny Magazine;' and the completion of the 'Penny Cyclopædia.'

"Mr. Knight's health was drunk with much enthusiasm, and he returned thanks in a very expressive manner, modestly urging the greater services of Professor Long, the editor, in the completion of the 'Penny Cyclopædia.' The Chairman, after tendering apologies for the absence of Lord Denman, Lord John Russell, and Dr. Lushington, proposed the health of Professor Long, who duly returned thanks, and called on the assembly to thank the contributors whose valuable aid he had received. After a few words from Professor Key, Mr. Weir proposed the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, to which Lord Wrottesley responded.

"Some excellent speeches were made during the evening, especially one by Mr. M. D. Hill, who pointed out that the 'Pictorial History of England,' projected by Mr. Knight, had realised a long-cherished idea, that of seeing a history of England which would make the people and the progress of national institutions a prominent feature. To this toast Mr. Craik responded. The Rev. Mr. Jones, who proposed the health of Lord Brougham, was warmly applauded in declaring that neither the Church nor religion had anything to fear from the spread of useful knowledge, but, on the contrary, its diffusion was tributary to the highest and best interests of mankind."

In connection with the paragraph respecting the dinner at the Albion which I have quoted from the "Athenæum," was the following notice:—"We may add, as equally significant of the change that is

coming over the spirit of the age, that Her Majesty has been pleased to signify, through Sir Henry Wheatley, her desire that copies of Mr. Knight's forthcoming publications, entitled *Knight's Weekly Volume*, should be supplied to the libraries established at all the palaces."

The "change that is coming over the spirit of the age" had probably some regard to times happily long past, when literature was the toy of a king and his courtesans, or the scorn of another crowned head who hated "Boets and Bainters." There was a period nearer to our own when the great were considered the exclusive patrons of letters. Queen Victoria upheld "the spirit of the age" in her gracious support of a series of books professedly cheaper than any collection that had previously existed. The undertaking had several features of novelty, and of general interest. I was proud of the patronage of the Queen. Perhaps I was equally pleased with the encouragement I received from a distinguished writer, with whom I had not then the happiness of that intimate acquaintance which I have subsequently enjoyed. On the 4th of June, I received a letter from Mr. Charles Dickens, who had seen my Prospectus, and pronounced "the whole scheme full of the highest interest." He adds:—"If I can ever be of the feeblest use in advancing a project so intimately connected with an end on which my heart is set—the liberal education of the people—I shall be sincerely glad. All good wishes and success attend you."

The prospectus to which Mr. Dickens refers was entitled "Book-Clubs for all Readers." It set forth that one of the first attempts, and it was a successful one, to establish a cheap Book-Club was made by

Robert Burns. He had founded a Society at Tarbolton, called the Bachelors' Club, which met monthly for the purposes of discussion and conversation. But this was a club without books; for the fines levied upon the members were spent in conviviality. Having changed his residence to Mauchline, a similar club was established there, but with one important alteration:—the fines were set apart for the purchase of books, and the first work bought was "The Mirror," by Henry Mackenzie. The prospectus went on to notice that, in 1825, Mr. Brougham, in his "Practical Observations upon the Education of the People," had maintained that Book-Clubs or Reading Societies might be established by small numbers of contributors, and would require only an inconsiderable fund. He says—having mentioned a few works which were then in existence—"I would here remark the great effect of combination upon such plans, in making the money of individuals go far. Three-halfpence a week, laid by in a whole family, will enable it to purchase in a year one of the cheap volumes of which I have spoken above; and a penny a week would be sufficient, were the publications made as cheap as possible. Now, let only a few neighbours join, say ten or twelve, and lend each other the books bought, and it is evident that, for a price so small as to be within the reach of the poorest labourer, all may have full as many books in the course of the year as it is possible for them to read, even supposing that the books bought by every one are not such as all the others desire to have."

The publications which I proposed to make "as cheap as possible," would enable a family to purchase four separate books at the end of a year by laying by a penny a week. But if twelve neighbours, or twelve

fellow-workmen, or twelve apprentices, or twelve school boys, were to form a book-club to which each should contribute a penny a week, the association would find itself at the end of the year in possession of fifty-two of "Knight's Weekly Volumes," to be preserved as a Joint-Stock Library, or sold to the highest bidder, according to the plan of expensive Book-Clubs.

The prospectus, in thus proposing a new element of association which remained to be developed amongst the great body of the people—in addition to the usual demand by individual purchasers—gave a few simple rules for the proper regulation of the Book-Club for all Readers. My plan was to issue, at the price of one shilling, every Saturday, a volume, which should be essentially a book, not a tract, containing as much matter as an ordinary octavo volume of 300 pages.

The first "Weekly Volume" was published on the 29th of June, 1844. In the introduction to one of the early volumes I said: "To Miss Martineau we are deeply indebted for the ardent zeal with which she has recommended the project of the series of books to which this volume belongs, and for the sound judgment with which she has assisted us in arranging the details of a plan that mainly owes its origin to her unwearied solicitude for the good of her fellow-creatures." I have reserved the mention in these "Passages" of my earlier intercourse with Miss Martineau, till I could associate her name with a period at which I, more fully than before, comprehended the energy of her character, the fertility of her genius, and the rich variety of her knowledge. I had become slightly acquainted with her in 1830,

when she was seeking a publisher for her "Illustrations of Political Economy." The Committee of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge were then as opposed to works of imagination, as if they had been "budge doctors of the Stoic fur," whose vocation was to despise everything not of direct utility. In a year or so, the house in which she dwelt with her mother in Westminster was frequented by crowds of visitors of rank and talent, eager to pay their homage to the young authoress, whose little books went forth monthly in apparently inexhaustible profusion, delighting many readers who did not care to be instructed, and satisfying the discreet few by the soundness of their conclusions. Previous to her voyage to America in 1835, I frequently met Miss Martineau at the house of Mr. Bellenden Ker. I mention this with many a vivid recollection of the charm of her conversation. Her deafness was so neutralised by the rapidity of her perceptions, that it almost ceased to be embarrassing to herself or her hearers. Upon her return from the United States, she wrote several of the numbers of the "Guides to Service," which I was then publishing. Her power of accurate observation, and her plain good sense, enabled her as effectively to instruct "The Maid of all Work" in her duties, as her insight into the feelings of the young, gave her the power of writing for me four of the prettiest volumes of children's books in our language, "The Play-Fellow."

At the Easter of 1844, I went to Tynemouth, for the especial purpose of conferring with Miss Martineau upon that series of books which was eventually published as the "Weekly Volume." We had corresponded much upon this interesting subject;

but as my plans were approaching maturity, I felt how advantageous it would be for me to accept her invitation to visit her, and to avail myself of the intervals of ease in which she could converse without injury. For she was confined to her room, as she had been for several years, by an illness which sometimes almost forbad the hope of recovery. But when she was free from pain and not prostrated by languor, she could talk with animation and cheerfulness upon the subject of popular education, which then seemed nearest her heart. I sat with her on bright mornings by the side of her sofa under the window from which she looked out upon a green down, and, beyond, the harbour of the Tyne and all its traffic, "the view extending from the light-houses far to the right, to a horizon of sea to the left." In her cheerful observation of outward things, I had a lesson of the All-wise Goodness which compensates by so many blessings the sufferings of humanity. There is a beautiful passage in her "Life in the Sick-Room," which recalls to me the state of her mind when I was thus permitted to share her confidence. She notices how indescribably clear to her were many truths of life from her observation of the doings of the tenants of a single row of houses: "Nothing can be more ordinary than the modes of life which I overlook, yet am I kept wide awake in my watch by ever new instances of the fulness of pleasure derivable from the scantiest sources; of the vividness of emotion excitable by the most trifling incidents; of the wonderful power pride has of pampering itself upon the most meagre food; and, above all, of the infinite ingenuity of human love. Nothing, perhaps, has impressed me so deeply as the

clear view I have of almost all, if not quite the whole, of the suffering I have witnessed being the consequence of vice or ignorance. But when my heart has sickened at the sight, and at the thought of so much gratuitous pain, it has grown strong again in the reflection that, if unnecessary, this misery is temporary—that the true ground of mourning would be if the pain were not from causes which are remediable. Then I cannot but look forward to the time when the bad training of children,—the petulancies of neighbours—the errors of the ménage—the irksome superstitions, and the seductions of intemperance, shall all have been annihilated by the spread of intelligence; while the mirth at the minutest jokes—the proud plucking of nosegays—the little neighbourly gifts (less amusing hereafter, perhaps, in their taste)—the festal observances—the disinterested and refined acts of self-sacrifice and love, will remain as long as the human heart has mirth in it, or a human complacency and self-respect,—as long as its essence is what it has ever been 'but a little lower than the angels.'"

Miss Martineau, with indefatigable zeal unabated by illness, had written to many persons of influence to interest them in our project. Whilst with her, I received an invitation from Mr. James Marshall, to visit him at his house near Leeds, on my return to London. Here I spent two very pleasant days, chiefly in earnest discussions with Mrs. Marshall (formerly the Hon. Miss Spring Rice), on the quality of the books that were wanted for factory workers, especially the young people. Mr. Marshall took me over that wonderful flax-mill, where he and his brothers had recently built not only the largest room for a

manufactory, but the largest room in the world. It covered five times as much space as Westminster Hall, extending over nearly two acres of ground. All the work here carried on was of a cleanly character; for the coarse processes previous to that of spinning were done out of this building. The hundreds of workers employed were chiefly females, watching the movements of thousands of spindles, and supplying by patient attention what the beautiful machinery could not effect without human aid. It was an anxious time for mill-owners; for Parliament was debating whether the twelve hours of labour in factories should be reduced to ten. This change many capitalists, even with the most benevolent intentions, believed would be fatal to their interests, as well as so reduce the wages of the factory workers as to cause great misery. The proposed measure was defeated. The education clauses of the government factory bill had been previously rejected, in accordance with the narrow views of both churchmen and dissenters. Messrs. Marshall, and a few of the more enlightened class of mill-owners, had not waited for the establishment of state plans of factory education. They had excellent schools within their mill; and I attended Mrs. James Marshall whilst she interested herself in the instruction of the classes. I had brought with me from Miss Martineau's a book, which had been presented to her from some factory girls in America: "The Lowell Offering, a Repository of Original Articles; written exclusively by females actually employed in the Mills." The sight of the great flax factory and its schools—the earnest solicitude of Mrs. Marshall for the education of the children in her husband's employment—in-

duced me, upon my return home, to look carefully at this work. Miss Martineau had told me that I should find in these volumes some things which might be read with pleasure and information. I rather shrank from the task, for I felt that all literary productions, and indeed all works of art, should be judged without reference to the condition of the producer. My reluctance was soon overcome, after I had read two or three of these papers. I then learnt that Mr. Dickens, in his "American Notes," had mentioned that he had read of the first volume, "four hundred good solid pages from beginning to end," and that the articles, putting out of sight that they had been written by girls after the arduous labours of the day, might compare advantageously with those of many English Annuals. I soon resolved to publish a selection from these volumes, and I entitled the little book, "Mind amongst the Spindles." I wrote rather an elaborate introduction to this volume. One portion of it was suggested by what I had seen and heard at Leeds. As the intellectual improvement of factory workers must always be of permanent importance—and as the results of a better education than prevailed amongst them twenty years ago have been abundantly shewn, in the conduct and feelings of Lancashire operatives during the fearful crisis through which they have been passing—I hesitate not to quote a passage of some extent. I said of these Lowell girls, "During their twelve hours of daily labour, when there were easy but automatic services to perform, waiting upon a machine—with that slight degree of skill which no machine can ever attain—for the repair of the accidents of its unvarying progress, they may, without a

neglect of their duty, have been elevating their minds in the scale of being by cheerful lookings-out upon nature, by pleasant recollections of books, by imaginary converse with the just and wise who have lived before them, by consoling reflections upon the infinite goodness and wisdom which regulates this world, so unintelligible without such a dependence. These habits have given them cheerfulness and freedom amidst their uninterrupted toils. We see no repinings against their twelve hours' labour, for it has had its solace. Even during the low wages of 1842, which they mention with sorrow but without complaint, the same cultivation goes on. The 'Lowell Offering' is still produced. To us of England these things ought to be encouraging. To the immense body of our factory operatives the example of what the girls of Lowell have done should be especially valuable. It should teach them that their strength, as well as their happiness, lies in the cultivation of their minds. To the employers of operatives, and to all of wealth and influence amongst us, this example ought to manifest that a strict and diligent performance of daily duties, in work prolonged as much as in our own factories, is no impediment to the exercise of those faculties, and the gratification of those tastes, which, whatever the world may have thought, can no longer be held to be limited by station. There is a contest going on amongst us, as it is going on all over the world, between the hard imperious laws which regulate the production of wealth, and the aspirations of benevolence for the increase of human happiness. We do not deplore the contest; for out of it must come a gradual subjection of the iron necessity to the holy influences of love and charity.

Such a period cannot, indeed, be rashly anticipated by legislation against principles which are secondary laws of nature; but one thing, nevertheless, is certain—that such an improvement of the operative classes, as all good men, and we sincerely believe amongst them the great body of manufacturing capitalists, ardently pray for and desire to labour in their several spheres to attain, will be brought about in a parallel progression with the elevation of the operatives themselves in mental cultivation, and consequently in moral excellence."

The series of the "Weekly Volume" was commenced with a book written by myself, "William Caxton, the first English Printer, a Biography." During the course of two years, one hundred and five volumes were issued regularly, the weekly publication not having been omitted in a single instance. The subjects had always been selected upon a plan which had (in the course of this time) attained a certain completeness; and a little library having been formed, equally suited to Book Clubs and private purchasers, it was unnecessary to continue the publication at the rapid rate which had been previously thought desirable. The "Weekly Volume" then became the "Shilling Volume." In the monthly issue it was continued for two more years. I shall have occasion briefly to refer to the series in the next epoch of my "Working Life," for some books of original value were comprised in it, and their writers merit especial mention. The editorial conduct of the Series was to me a labour of love. The success, and the reputation which it acquired, compensated me for the falling off in the demand for the "Penny Magazine," for which there

were many causes; particularly the extended sale of newspapers, and the application of wood-engravings to their illustration. To close the story of my literary connection with the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, I will here advert to the last days of the popular miscellany upon which I had laboured for fourteen years.

The "Penny Magazine" of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge terminated on the 27th of December, 1845. In 1841, after the publication of nine volumes of the original form and character, a second series was issued, which is comprised in five volumes. I may truly say that the object of the change was to present to a public which had been advancing in education, a Miscellany of a higher character than the first series. The engravings were superior; the writing was less "ramble-scramble." There were a series of articles on the great Italian painters, by Mrs. Jameson. During three years the factories of London and the country were visited by Mr. Dodd and a competent artist, to provide descriptions of all our great manufactories. Mr. Thorne wrote papers of a topographical nature, which indicated the talent and knowledge which he would subsequently display in "Rambles by Rivers." Mr. Saunders wrote a series of clever articles on "The Canterbury Tales." And yet the sale fell off. The superintendence of the Society had merged in my individual responsibility as editor when I announced a new "Penny Magazine." It was thenceforth to be chiefly a magazine of reading; woodcuts no longer continuing to be the prominent feature in the work. I took a zealous interest in this little Miscellany. In the

first number I republished one of Praed's charming Enigmas, with an illustration by Harvey. I also then commenced a series entitled "The Caricaturist's Portrait Gallery." John Wilkes, by Hogarth; Charles Churchill, by Hogarth; Lord North, as the State-Coachman asleep; Burke throwing down the Dagger—these, with brief biographical notices, constituted a novel feature, which I would recommend some weekly or monthly provider of light literature to take up. Of Praed's Enigmas I published fourteen. In the desire to prevent the memory of my early friend from falling into oblivion amongst a new generation, I gave "Some Specimens" of his writings in addition, with a brief memoir. In 1839 this extraordinary genius died in the prime of life. He had married in 1835. In the last American edition of his Poems we are presented with "the following sketch of his appearance, from the pencil of N. P. Willis, Esq.:"—"It was our good fortune, when first in England (in 1834 or '35), to be a guest at the same hospitable country-house for several weeks. The party there assembled was somewhat a famous one—Miss Jane Porter, Miss Julia Pardoe, Krazinski (the Polish historian), Sir Gardiner Wilkinson (the oriental traveller), venerable Lady Cork ('Lady Bellair' of D'Israeli's novel), and several persons more distinguished in society than in literature. Praed, we believe, had not been long married, but he was there with his wife. He was apparently about thirty-five, tall, and of dark complexion, with a studious bend in his shoulders, and of irregular features strongly impressed with melancholy. His manners were particularly reserved, though as unassuming as they well could be. His

exquisitely beautiful poem of 'Lillian' was among the pet treasures of the lady of the house, and we had all been indulged with a sight of it, in a choicely bound manuscript copy,—but it was hard to make him confess to any literary habits or standing. As a gentleman of ample means and retired life, the kind of notice drawn upon him by the admiration of this poem seemed distasteful. His habits were very secluded. We only saw him at table and in the evening; and for the rest of the day he was away in the remote walks and woods of the extensive park round the mansion, apparently more fond of solitude than of anything else. Mr. Praed's mind was one of wonderful readiness—rhythm and rhyme coming to him with the flow of an improvvisatore. The ladies of the party made the events of every day the subjects of charades, epigrams, sonnets, &c., with the design of suggesting inspiration to his ready pen; and he was most brilliantly complying, with treasures for each in her turn."

It would be difficult for the most bungling limner that ever tried his hand at "Pencilings," to produce any sketch so unlike as this of Praed. He was not "of dark complexion;" his features were not "strongly impressed with melancholy;" his manners were not "particularly reserved." To the forward American he was unquestionably cold. The reason has been told me by one who best knew.—There was archery going on. Mrs. Praed had been lucky in hitting the mark, and Mr. Willis offered her some extravagant compliment, such as well-bred Englishmen are careful not to venture upon even with their most intimate friends. From a stranger the adulation was impertinence. Mr. Praed overheard this,

and accordingly took his measure of the man with the note-book.

My brief memoir of my early friend concluded with a glance at his parliamentary career: "The two great speakers of the Cambridge Union, Thomas Babington Macaulay and Winthrop Mackworth Praed, sat on opposite benches, when the oratory of sport had become a stern reality. The one has fulfilled all the hopes of his youth; the other, we can only speak of him with unbidden tears.

> 'But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
> And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
> Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred shears,
> And slits the thin-spun life. But not the praise.'"

"Knight's Penny Magazine," as the miscellany which commenced in January, 1846, was called, had a short existence. In the sixth monthly part, I thus announced its discontinuance: "The present Series of the 'Penny Magazine' is closed after an experiment of only six months. The Editor has no reason to complain of the want of public encouragement, for the sale of this Series has exceeded that of its predecessor in 1845. But the sale, such as it is, is scarcely remunerating; and there are indications that it may decline rather than increase. This is a hint which cannot be mistaken. It shall not be said of his humble efforts to continue, upon an equality with the best of his contemporaries, a publication which once had a decided pre-eminence, that

> 'Superfluous lags the veteran on the stage.'

He leaves this portion of popular literature to be cultivated by those whose new energy may be worth

more than his old experience. The 'Penny Magazine' shall begin and end with him. It shall not pass into other hands."

Three months before I had thus put an end to my participation in the good or the evil of the Penny Press, the Committee of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge announced the suspension of their operations. Their "Address," dated March 11, 1846, offered an explanation of their motives for this step. The circumstances attending the publication of the "Biographical Dictionary" had led to this determination. The Society had undertaken this great work at its own risk. It now felt what it was to engage in a serial publication that was not likely to be concluded during ten or more years, and to find the public support altogether inadequate to defray its literary expenditure. A Society can do what an individual can not dare to achieve. It could leave the battle-field. It was not so with me, when the "Penny Cyclopædia" was dragging me down. The Society had a charter, and might some day renew its active life:

> "He that fights and runs away,
> May live to fight another day."

Had I not fought on to the end of my perilous commercial enterprise, I should have been disgraced. Individual members of the Committee subscribed liberally to keep on their "Biographical Dictionary," and no one more generously than Earl Spencer. Had his death not occurred during the struggle to meet the loss of this bold commercial undertaking, it is probable that the Society would not have thus sung its requiem:—

"Though the Committee always counted upon a loss, or at the best upon a deficiency which could not be made good until long after the completion of the work, neither they, nor others more conversant with the chances of the bookselling-trade, were at all prepared to expect so large a deficiency as appeared by the time the letter A was completed. On these seven half-volumes the excess of expenditure above receipts amounts to nearly 5000*l.* Of this loss, more than half, it appears, has been sustained by the Society, and the remainder of the subscriptions and donations which have been announced from time to time. Though the first sale of the work was encouraging, as giving some reason to hope that it would shortly rise to such a point as might enable the Committee to proceed steadily to the end, yet it was found that the average rate of sale of the seven half-volumes produced the defalcation above alluded to. And careful estimates showed that, under existing circumstances, an additional sum of at least 15,000*l.* must be sunk. A work commenced in parts ought to be continued to the full extent which the capital of the undertaker will allow. The Society has obeyed this reasonable rule, and has exhausted its resources."

The Committee with perfect justice turn away from the contemplation of one failure to rejoice over a long continued success: "The Society's work is done, for its greatest object is achieved—fully, fairly, and permanently. The public is supplied with *cheap* and *good* literature to an extent which the most sanguine friend of human improvement could not in 1826, have hoped to have witnessed in twenty years."

But there was a temporary evil to counterbalance this permanent success. *All* the cheap literature was not good at the period of this triumphant retrospect. This was a circumstance that was sufficiently mortifying to those who, like myself, had formed an over sanguine estimate of the benefit that was likely to result from the general diffusion of the ability to read. The "Penny Magazine" and "Chambers's Journal" had, in 1832, driven the greater number of noxious publications out of the field. The great body of the people appeared satisfied with good solid food, without any inordinate craving for stale pastry, and with an utter disrelish of offal. But a taste for garbage, cooked up for the satisfaction of the lowest appetite, seemed to have returned. I made no lamentation over the cheapness which had become excessive. I did not regret that there was a competition going on in cheap weekly publications which was wholly unprecedented. In 1846, fourteen penny and penny-halfpenny Magazines, twelve Economical and Social Journals, and thirty-seven weekly sheets, forming separate books, were to be found in the shops of many regular booksellers, and on the counters of all the small dealers in periodicals that had started up throughout the country. The cheapness was accomplished in some by pilfering from every copyright work that came in their way. There were very few of these publications whose writers were paid for original articles upon a scale as liberal as that of the best reviews and magazines. There were some of a character to render the principle of cheapness dangerous and disgusting. In the concluding address of "Knight's Penny Magazine," I said: "The editor

rejoices that there are many in the field, and some who have come at the eleventh hour, who deserve the wages of zealous and faithful labourers. But there are others who are carrying out the principle of cheap weekly sheets, to the disgrace of the system, and who appear to have got some considerable hold upon the less-informed of the working people, and especially upon the young. There are manufactories in London whence hundreds of reams of vile paper and printing issue weekly; where large bodies of children are employed to arrange types, at the wages of shirt-makers, from copy furnished by the most ignorant, at the wages of scavengers. In truth, such writers, if they deserve the name of writers, *are* scavengers. All the garbage that belongs to the history of crime and misery is raked together, to diffuse a moral miasma through the land, in the shape of the most vulgar and brutal fiction. 'Penny Magazines,' and 'Edinburgh Journals,' and 'Weekly Instructors,' and 'People's Journals,' have little chance of circulation *amongst the least-informed class*, who most require sound knowledge, while the cheap booksellers' shops are filled with such things as 'Newgate, a Romance,' 'The Black Mantle, or the Murder at the old Jewry,' 'The Spectre of the Hall,' 'The Love-Child,' 'The Feast of Blood,' 'The Convict,' and twenty others, all of the same exciting character to the young and ignorant. But the detrimental exercise of the printing-press is only to be met by its wholesome employment. He has no fear for the righteous cause of cheap literature."

My conviction that the cheap press would purify itself was realised in another decade. I had given a name to the wholesome literature for the people,

"The Fountain"—the noxious I had called "The Sewer." But I contended, as I had ever done, that the Paper Duty was an insurmountable barrier to the diffusion of publications that should combine the qualities of literary excellence and extreme cheapness. I maintained that to thrust out the noxious publications, the supply of the higher class must be abundant; the quality of the writing must be of the best, for to write well for the people is the rarest of literary qualifications; lastly, the price must as nearly as possible approach to the cost of the mischievous production. Whatever interferes with the circulation of the higher periodicals by increasing their price—whatever tends to render a false economy necessary, by lowering their payment for the best literary labour—interferes with one of the most important instruments of National Education, using the term in its highest sense. Such were the injurious consequences of the Paper Duty. That long disputed question has now been settled. The total repeal of this impost took place after my commercial career was in a great degree closed. How this tax weighed me down in the production of the "Penny Cyclopædia," I have related in a pamphlet of 1850, which was often quoted in Parliament, and which has some interest as a matter of literary history. I give the most material passage as a Note to this Chapter.

NOTE TO CHAPTER XV

EXTRACT FROM "THE STRUGGLES OF A BOOK AGAINST EXCESSIVE TAXATION." BY CHARLES KNIGHT. 1850.

ON the 1st of January, 1833, I commenced the publication of THE PENNY CYCLOPÆDIA, in Numbers and Monthly Parts.

This work was entirely original. It was projected by myself, and published under the Superintendence of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. But the entire cost and risk were borne by me. The total cost for Literature and Engravings was 42,000*l.*

The Penny Cyclopaedia and its Supplement were completed in 1846. The two works contain 15,764 pages, and the quantity of Paper required to produce a single copy is 2 Reams, each weighing 35 lbs. At the period of its completion, the *entire quantity of Paper* consumed in the work was FIFTY THOUSAND REAMS, the *total weight* of which amounted to ONE MILLION SEVEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND POUNDS. Of this weight 20,000 Reams, or 700,000 lbs., paid the Excise Duty of *Threepence* per lb., amounting to 8750*l.*; and the remaining 30,000 Reams paid the reduced Duty of *Three-halfpence* per lb. (commencing in 1837) upon 1,050,000 lbs., amounting to 6562*l.* The total Duty paid up to the completion of the Cyclopædia, in 1846, was 15,312*l.* Since that period 2000 Reams of Paper have been used in reprinting, to correct the inequalities of the Stock, making an addition of 70,000 lbs., excised at 437*l.* But further, the Wrappers for the Monthly Parts have used 1500 Reams of Paper, taxed at 400*l.*, and the Milled Boards employed in binding the Volumes have been also taxed about 300*l.* THE TOTAL PAYMENT TO THE

EXCISE BY THE PENNY CYCLOPÆDIA HAS BEEN SIXTEEN THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED POUNDS.

I propose to show,—

1. That this excessive burthen upon the great work to which I have devoted seventeen years of toil and anxiety, has been the primary cause that the enterprise has not yet been remunerative.
2. That the continuance of the Paper Duty, at the present rate of Three-halfpence per lb., prevents me undertaking the publication of a new and improved edition, *upon its first plan of a continuous alphabetical arrangement.*

1. The positive burthen of Sixteen thousand five hundred Pounds imposed by the State upon the publication of one book, is far from representing the difficulty and loss which that payment has entailed upon the undertaking.

It is well known that the amount of a duty upon raw material by no means represents the amount of the charge which it entails upon the manufacturer. Mr. MacCulloch and Mr. Porter rightly state that the price for a ream of one particular sort of printing paper was in 1831, twenty-four shillings,—in 1843, fifteen shillings and sixpence. From 1833 to 1837, the price of a Ream of Penny Cyclopædia Paper was thirty-three shillings; from 1838 to 1846, it was twenty-four shillings. The difference in price was nine shillings per ream; the amount of reduced duty was four shillings and fourpence halfpenny. The paper-makers and the stationers doubled the tax.* But even at the reduced rate it has been satisfactorily shown by my fellow-labourers, the Messrs. Chambers, that the Duty enters one-third into price. Unquestionably, if the Duty were now removed, I could buy a Ream of similar paper for seventeen shillings. The tax, preventing competition, and giving

* "Whatever renders a larger capital necessary in any trade or usiness, limits the competition in that business; and by giving something like a monopoly to a few dealers, enables them to keep up the price beyond what would afford the ordinary rate of profit." —John Mill, *Principles of Political Economy*, vol. ii. p. 388. If the tax annihilates profits in a secondary process, such as the conversion of paper into books, it is easy to understand how the monopoly becomes complete.

undue advantages to capitalists, had the effect of making me pay for my Paper, from 1833 to 1837, sixteen shillings a Ream more than the price of untaxed Paper would be, or Sixteen thousand Pounds upon 20,000 Reams; and from 1838 to 1846, seven shillings per Ream more than I should otherwise have paid, which upon 30,000 Reams amounts to Ten thousand five hundred Pounds. *The tax therefore operated as a burthen upon my publication to the extent of* TWENTY-SIX THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED POUNDS, during its long and difficult progress to completion. The paper since used for Reprints, and the paper for Wrappers, has been raised in price 2500*l.* by the same process.

The Struggles of one Book against excessive Taxation are, up to this point, to be measured by a burthen of TWENTY-NINE THOUSAND POUNDS.

But I have not yet done. The tax has been working against the Penny Cyclopædia for seventeen years, in the chronic form of interest and compound interest.

It was very long before the periodical sale settled into a regular quantity. The work became too extensive for the great bulk of purchasers. For the first few months of the publication the sale was double what it was at the end of the first year. The sale of the first year doubled that of the fourth year. The sale of the fourth year doubled that of the eighth year,—and then it found its level and became steady to the end, reduced from 55,000 at the commencement, to 20,000 at the conclusion. Every publisher of a periodical work knows the accumulation of Stock that must inevitably take place with a falling demand. There never was a period after the third year at which I had less than Five thousand Reams of the Penny Cyclopædia in my Warehouse; upon which Duty had been paid, for some portion at the high duty, and for some at the low, averaging 1500*l.* In 1841 there were in my Warehouse 1200 Reams upon which the high duty, expiring in 1837, had been paid. I consider the accumulating interest in this investment, in actually paid Duty, upon dead Stock, to have amounted, in the seventeen years during which I have been labouring to sell that Stock, to 1500*l.*, and including the interest upon the extra price charged by the paper-manufacturer upon the Duty, to 3000*l.*

And here, then, will the usual conclusion arise, that the

Publisher has not borne this load of *Thirty-two thousand Pounds* imposed by the State upon the Penny Cyclopædia, but the purchasers of the Penny Cyclopædia. My answer is very direct. Had that sum of 32,000*l*. been actually saved to me, I should not have been a pound richer by the publication of the Penny Cyclopædia. But with the saving I should not have been to that amount poorer. The outlay was so great, that it could never pay its expenses under a sale of 36,000 copies with the high duty. In the first five years that average number was printed; but the accumulation of Stock locked up 10,000*l*. Under the low duty it paid its expenses at 30,000 copies. The actual average sale during the nine years of that duty was 20,000. It would have required that there should have been no Paper Duty at all to have paid its expenses on a sale of 20,000. Had the Duty not been reduced by one-half at the end of 1836, I could not by any possibility have carried on the work. As it was, I struggled to the end.

2. The reduced Paper Duty, as I have undertaken to show, prevents me making the best use of the valuable Copyright which remains to me,—now that the accumulated Stock is in great part exhausted.

I was advised to propose a Subscription for an entirely new Edition. The highest Personage in the realm accorded me Her support, and so did Her admirable Consort, who is doing for Science and Industry what is worth far more than any money value. Some of the most eminent in the walks of intellect also came forward to aid me. Of the support of the Members of the Legislature which taxed me during fourteen years, I have not much to boast. I have given up the design. Upon a sale that would have merely returned my new outlay, the Paper Duty would have burthened the work to the extent of 3000*l*. Its abandonment would have lightened my risk to the extent of making the work yield me as high a profit from 3000 subscribers, as from 4000 subscribers with the Duty continued. With this encouragement I should have gone on.

There is a steady demand for the existing edition of the Penny Cyclopædia, to the extent of 250 Sets annually. The Paper Duty prevents me meeting this demand with any moderate commercial profit. The technical explanation is not difficult to be understood:—If I print 250 Copies only

—I use 500 Reams of Paper, of which the Duty is 4*s.* 6*d.* each, and the necessary increase of manufacturer's price 2*s.* 6*d.*, making a charge, arising out of the Duty, of 7*s.* per Ream, or 175*l.* upon 250 Copies. But in printing only 250 Copies I have to pay for the Presswork, as high as 15*s.* per Ream; whereas if I printed 500, I should only pay 10*s.* As the number of a book first printed increases, the cost of Presswork, or Machine-work, diminishes; and for this reason a tax upon the raw material of a book, Paper, increasing the risk of printing a large impression, compels a smaller impression, at a higher cost. But if there were no Paper Duty, I should print 500 Copies, by which I should save 350*l.* in the price of Paper, and 250*l.* in the price of Presswork; making a saving of 600*l.* This outlay of 600*l.* is imposed upon me absolutely by the existence of the Paper Duty; and that fact will possibly compel me to give up reprinting a Book which has done more for the advancement of sound knowledge and general education in these kingdoms, than any work ever produced in any country. That 600*l.* saved would afford me an income which would allow me to invest capital in such a Reprint. Printing only 250 Copies at the present price of Paper, a set of this book would cost me 1000*l.* My net profit upon that outlay would not be 10 per cent.

And with all this danger and difficulty—with "this lion in my path"—I am not yet beaten. I have my valuable copyright of the Penny Cyclopædia remaining to me; and I have passed many an anxious hour in seeing how I can best turn it to account. I am about to publish a *Series of separate Cyclopædias*, with large improvements, and I begin with a 'Cyclopædia of British Geography,' and a 'Cyclopædia of Arts and Industry.' Let me show the exact track which "the lion in my path" drives me to seek; and then some of those legislators who find that a fashionable novel, sold at a guinea and a half, pays about fourpence Paper Duty, and thence conclude that it is the lightest of taxes, and by all means should be preserved—especially as books, as they hold, are not necessaries of life—some of those who

"Hate not learning worse than toad or asp,"

may know what it is to maintain a tax upon knowledge,

struggling to preserve its high rank and its useful extension amidst the widest competition of cheapness.

Upon these four volumes, estimated to contain about 3000 pages, I shall expend 1500*l.* upon new editorial labour. I shall further expend about 1000*l.* upon new plates and maps. The printer's charge for setting up the types will be 800*l.*; and the cost of stereotyping will be 500*l.* Add for advertising 200*l.*; and I have thus to expend 4000*l.* as a first outlay, whether I sell 500 copies or 5000. At the present cost of paper, 3000 copies (the least number I could print with advantage) will amount to 1500*l.*; the Press-work will cost 500*l.*: total 6000*l.* The 3000 copies, produced upon this scale, will exactly cover my outlay, without a shilling profit. But let us see how the account would stand with the price of paper reduced one-third by the abolition of the duty. My course would then be to print 4000 copies, and not stereotype, which process is chiefly employed to save the outlay of capital in taxed paper. The first outlay is therefore 3500*l.*; the Paper for 4000 Copies, at the lower untaxed price, would cost me 1333*l.*; the Presswork 600*l.* (reduced per ream on account of the larger number). I produce, therefore, 4000 copies for 5433*l.*, instead of 3000 copies for 6000*l.* I expend less by 567*l.*, and I have 1000 copies left to sell for my profit. I could sell 4000 copies, under these circumstances, more easily than 3000 as I now stand, for I could afford to advertise more freely, and to offer higher inducements to retailers. This is something different from a fourpenny tax upon a fashionable novel.

END OF VOL. II.

BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.